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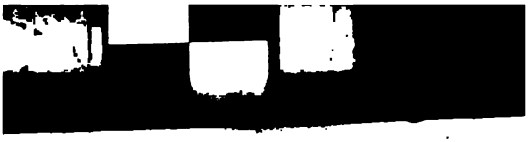

MIDSUMMER EVE:

A Tale.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1842.

614.

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TO

MRS. BENONI PEACH,

This Tale

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY HER SON-IN-LAW,

THE AUTHOR.

MIDSUMMER EVE.

INTRODUCTION.

It is strange, that while a truism is the thing which men receive with the least possible wonder, doubt, or argumentation, any one circumstance of human nature, or any one act of social life, the commonness of which has created truisms, is received with amazement, and discussed by the millions of the world as though it were unexampled in history. An abstract principle is certainly easier to be comprehended than an event; yet selfishness, rather than imbecility, is the cause of this contradiction, for man may with all his soul agree to a truism in words, while a truism in action would not be perfectly assented to until the opposition of interest and prejudice is overcome, and he is able to look on the

actions of men as disinterestedly as the mathematician looks on the symbols of a proposition. It is for this reason that though the actions of individuals and the events of nations, from the creation till now, have proceeded in regular series, men still wonder when they see or hear of anything a little beyond their own experience or ability; for if they would but apply to actions the truisms which they almost laugh at for their extreme obviousness, there would be very little indeed in the progress of the world that would create wonder. It is in consequence of this contradiction that the world is burdened with masses of historical works, wherein history is overlaid with philosophical disquisition, which is nothing but truisms diluted into treatises; because, if men applied to the events of history the principles which constantly guide them in their judgments of common life, they would very soon discover that the best of all history is that which confines itself to facts, and leaves deductions to the common sense and experience of mankind.

It would, doubtless, appear like a ridiculing of the dignity of history to treat any important and solemn event by a commentary of common places; but it would be in fact only what we admire

in every noted historian, so long as he conveys obvious truths in circuitous and flowery language. If, for example, the most important event in British history—the Reformation—were treated in this manner, the facts and the philosophy would be as follow.

The Romish religion in England, originally a pure and charitable institution, gradually, by the exercise of unlimited and unquestioned power, became corrupt; for unregulated power tends inevitably to abuse.

At length, many enlightened people opposed it, although they could not produce any national effect, as moral revolutions are never produced in a nation unless they are supported by the ruling powers.

At last, Henry VIII., in revenge of a private pique, strenuously endeavoured to destroy it, as revolutions are never effected through virtuous motives, but in revenge for personal injuries.

He was very successful in this endeavour, although he was himself a very bad man, and sullied the good work with robbery and unnecessary cruelty; but the excellence of a deed is not to be estimated by the character of the man who performs it.

The Reformation, powerfully commenced by the

king and seconded by the nobles, who divided among themselves the property of the church, was welcome to such of the people as had listened to the preaching of enlightened converts; and when he, dying soon after, left the completion of the work to his protestant son, Edward, it appeared probable that the new religion would be established for ever. But Edward died in early youth, and as soon as his catholic sister came to the throne, it was seen that the work was very far from a settled establishment; for it is an undeniable truth that national faiths are the growth of time.

Mary, a bigoted papist, endeavoured to restore the old religion which had been sanctified by so many ages of veneration, and she succeeded almost universally, proving that people generally follow their rulers in all that is not opposed to their self-interest, and that after every sudden reform, there will be a reaction or short struggle to return to the ancient system.

But Mary, smarting from personal injury, was too violent and too zealous; she endeavoured to force the consciences of the minority that did not willingly follow her; and the cruelty in which she imitated her father, and revenged his wickedness

and her own wrongs, alienated the hearts of many of the people: for in every great reform the general establishment of a principle rather than its universal reception should be looked to, as it will be certain to work its way after the government has declared in its favour; while persecution to create perfect uniformity, will exasperate the unwilling and disgust the indifferent, and by appealing to the first instinct of self-preservation, create hosts of new enemies.

Thus Mary, who began her reign with a people that immediately declared itself of the Romish church, by persecuting the few of a different opinion, alienated a great many others, and at the end of her short reign the nation was prepared for the reformed faith. Her successor, embittered against the popish faith by injuries she had endured, continued the work of reformation, and completed it; but she had little to do beyond keeping the people quiet; the length of her reign did all that was necessary, for in it fresh generations of people grew up, educated in the new faith—a proof that the surest of all reform is that which is grounded in the education of children.

A history thus written would not be considered

very learned or clever, but very little could be added to it, save a narration of the particular incidents; and this every person may prove by examining the disquisitions of any one of our modern historians, and separating the thoughts from the clouds of words by which they are adorned and concealed. Thus much has been said because I am about to commence an historical romance which, contrary to custom, will contain no prefatory erudition on the state of the world at the epoch of my narration. It would be very easy for me to fill a hundred pages with opinions and speculations; but when I mention that the time is the reign of the first Mary, I think the history given above will be sufficient for all purposes, as it certainly is all I know about it, and if I am not very greatly mistaken, some of our most voluminous writers on the subject might confess that they can tell us very little more.

CHAPTER I.

When the honest citizen of famous London town, in the sixteenth century, took his wife and children for a pleasant summer evening ramble into the country, after attending to his shop from six in the morning till six in the evening, there was no rural scene towards which he more willingly directed his steps than the beautiful and retired village of Islington. There were other villages larger and more splendid in the neighbourhood of the metropolis: but most of them had some qualities which Islington had not,

and the want of which made it a desirable point for the quiet rambles of a family which had been busily engaged during the day. Stratford was too far off; the roads to Paddington were very bad; Bermondsey and Radcliffe were mere fishing villages; and even Westminster, though the palace and the abbey made it a scene of interest, was not exactly the direction for the evening rambles of plain honest citizens. It was a very pleasant walk along the Strand; the houses and gardens of the nobility lately constructed, and in course of construction, both there and at Charing, together with the frequent glimpses of the river on which parties were hastening home in their wherries, made it a pleasant walk; but the numerous dangerous characters generally lurking about the Strand, in connexion with the neighbouring river, rendered it by no means a desirable lounge after nightfall. Islington possessed all the advantages that

could be desired in the circumstances. It was not more than two miles from the city wall, and from the New Gate a pleasant shady walk, rendered safe by the passing to and fro of numerous families of substantial citizens, and their courageous apprentices, led up to the high grounds of that metropolitan village, from whose little eminence could be gained a view of the meadows and corn-fields of Middlesex, Hertfordshire, and Essex; and what was not less pleasing, the church towers, the walls, and the smoking chimneys of the city, and the gorgeous spire of St. Paul's cathedral, piercing above them into the clear blue of heaven.

These evening walks were generally bounded by an intersection of two high roads—the greater one leading from the postern of Newgate, through Islington, towards Barnet and the north; and the other, from Kingsland and Essex towards Totten-

ham. At this point stood the remains of an antique cross, and facing towards London, a cottage of the humbler order, but exceedingly picturesque through its numerous rude projections, with a porch wherein an old man might love to sit in the summer evening, and look out on the distant city, and surrounded by vine and honeysuckle, running up among the carved framework of the upper story which hung over the ground floor, and formed a kind of verandah which might shield from both sun and rain. This cottage stood alone at the cross-road, and was in a perfectly rural situation: for though the city, two miles off, appeared close at hand, through the great height of some of the buildings; and the houses in Smithfield and St. John-street were still nearer—some of them, indeed, within a mile—yet the main part of Islington, lying on the Essex side of this high-road, and appearing from the cottage merely

a clump of trees, a person whose back was turned towards London might have thought himself in some country scene a hundred miles from a city. The citizens probably felt the rural loneliness of the situation, as that cross-road seemed to be an outer metropolitan boundary within which all was safe and homelike, and beyond which a man must expect to meet with robbers and the other dangers incident to travel.

In that cottage porch, many a young citizen doubtless observed, with eyes of admiration, a pretty young maiden surrounded with balls of twine and small cord, engaged in net-making. This maid was Annot, the daughter of widow Palmer, who lived in that cottage; and the young girl, through the summer, sat in the porch from morning till night, busily plying her fingers at her beautiful employment. So public a spot as that—the point of intersection of two great thoroughfares, where so many

gay citizens walked for pleasure, with more than ordinary liveliness, from having for a time done with trade, might seem not a very proper place for a young and modest virgin to sit, even at work. It might appear that she knew she was pretty, and loving to be admired and complimented, sat in that place of bustle as a spot where those tastes were most likely to be gratified. But this was not the case: if Annot knew she was pretty, she had learned it from her friends, and not from her mirror, and the words gave her not more pleasure than any others expressive of their affection. Not a particle of feminine vanity was mixed up in her composition; prettiness of face and form gave her no pleasure; a compliment on her person from the gayest noble would not have urged her heart one degree beyond its ordinary motion. Poor girl! one element of woman's joy she was deprived of—she was blind, and had been so from her birth.

Yes, she was blind. To her, images of physical beauty did not suggest ideas of admiration or delight, save as her heart sympathized with the pleasure of other people without comprehending the cause. Beauty of outline and grace of motion were incomprehensible to her; and a compliment on herself was utterly unvalued unless she knew and loved the voice that uttered it. She loved a compliment then, undoubtedly, though not because it gratified her vanity: she loved a compliment only then, but not because she believed in the general hollowness of the world's professions. Her mind was constructed on a simpler principle, and responded to humbler sympathies. She loved praise from the persons she loved, because it was a proof that they loved her and wished to please her. But, indeed, the poor girl was in little danger of having her head turned by flattery; for though her sweet face was in no manner deformed by

her misfortune, and her blue eyes were as clear as those of a person in the possession of good sight, her wandering and indecisive glances shewed in a moment her affliction, which was one that must always command feelings of pity, and invests the sufferer with a species of sanctity which protects from insult, whether of compliment or of reproach.

The citizens before mentioned, who would have passed the poor blind girl without notice, would, on a certain evening of June, 1555, have given a second glance at the porch in which she was working—not from admiration of its picturesque carvings, which were universal, but from interest in a visitor who though of a common order in the better kind of houses, never failed to amuse the populace, and the somewhat commonplace citizens of London. But, indeed, the group in the porch had some points of a picturesque character, separate from any local

interest in the mind of the observer. Annot was very simply clad, her garments not being very dissimilar to those of her class in all civilized nations. The blue homespun gown was the same in shape and hue as that of the former and the next generation, and appeared rather like a kind of petticoat, as it flowed from beneath the brown stomacher or corset which concealed, while it displayed, the delicate outline of her young and swelling bosom. The lacing of this corset was in front, and might be either carried close to the chin, or left partially open, to suit the modesty or coquetry of the lady; and it had a collar which, standing stiffly around the shoulders, was admirably adapted to display whatever beauty they possessed. A flat cap, of dark woollen, which suffered a glimpse of a black tress of her hair to be visible on each cheek, and shoes, the broadness of which, though less than was fashionable, was calculated to give an incorrect idea of her feet, completed her costume.

But her companion was altogether different. He was not one of a mass, whose habits and costume are imitated from his fellows. A peculiar taste or fancy clad him; and therefore his appearance was not, save in a very general view, that of a class. To begin at the lowest point, the shoes of this person were without fastenings of any kind, being fitted very nicely to the foot, while the upper leather hung loose about the ancle; but this was the custom of the time. His nether stocks, or stockings, were of exceedingly fine worsted—one dyed of a bright crimson, the other green—and fastened above the knee by yellow upper stocks or breeches puffed up to an enormous size, while the upper part of his body was arrayed in a doublet, or kind of waistcoat, of various colours, fitting close to his body. All this was a caricature of an exploded fashion, and seemed like a ridicule of the dress of one's grandfather; but the head-dress of this person was peculiar to his class. This was

a kind of cap fitting close round the forehead, but considerably fuller above, where it was divided into three parts, the centre of which was surmounted with the neck and head of a cock, which continually bobbed about at every movement; and the other two, in the shape of asses' ears, hung down over either shoulder, having a small bell attached to each. The original head-dress of such persons had been a kind of cowl, undoubtedly in ridicule of the monks, at a time when the church, in possession of absolute power, could afford to be laughed at; but since it had been attacked and had to fight a desperate and doubtful battle, it naturally assumed all the importance it could, and very zealous supporters were careful to do nothing which in any manner reflected on a spiritual member of it. Thus, as has been said, instead of a loose covering, to be drawn on and thrown back at pleasure, this person's head-dress fitted close, and

was put on so as to conceal his hair, which probably was to agree with his beardless face, as he was shaven as close as a priest.

This man, in motley, was a fool—not necessarily a fool in the common use of the word, as one whose mental powers were weak; nor the reverse of this, as a clever person playing the part of an idiot. Some authors have professed to classify these creatures, which must be considered a grave absurdity, since the body of domestic fools probably contained no two exactly alike, but consisted of individuals of every grade of intellect or folly, from the perfect satirist, who assumed the motley to be able to shoot the deadliest arrows with impunity, down to the poor idiot who was scarcely one degree above the lowest animal. But the better kind of fool, properly so called, was generally a person of considerable abilities, with a touch of weakness or madness that made him always uncertain. At one moment

he would utter a truth fit for the ear of a king, in language fit for a poet, and in the next a heap of vulgar and indecent doggerel, that deserved and received the whip. The best of the fools had somewhat of a poet about him: he would take the deepest interest in all the beautiful atmospheric changes; he would ramble about to gaze on the sunshine, the rainbow, the green trees, and the flowers: but in the midst of all his admiration, he could play a gross practical trick on any friend near him; though, with all his love of mischief, he could seldom be made to join in any scheme of a mischievous nature which he did not upset by his want of comprehension and connexion of thought. This infirmity of mind prevented him from becoming an associate of the populace; for though rejoicing in the kind of amusement that was most pleasing to the lower classes of society, he would not join in any tricks or schemes saving with the people of his

own household, or those for whom he had acquired affection. And this was the principal beauty of his character. The fool had a heart: he was not a mere toy for the amusement of every one—his attachment to master and mistress was unbounded, and while his gibes and tricks were not unfrequently exercised at their expense, his heart was filled with an unbounded love for them; and their death, imprisonment, or—as not unusual, their giving him, as one would give a dog, to a friend—not seldom caused the poor fool to pine away, and die of a broken heart.

Such were the two persons seated in that cottage porch, on the evening of June 22, 1555. But, picturesque as the poor blind girl and the fool might appear to modern eyes, the staid elderly citizens who were walking up and down from the city were too much accustomed to the sight of such persons to give them more than a cursory

glance, or a passing smile, so that they had full opportunity to converse without interruption or notice.

The fool walked into the porch with a somewhat flighty step, as though he were mimicking the airs of a fine gentleman in the solemn dance of the period, and seating himself opposite to the blind girl, looked in her face without speaking. But Annot was perfectly aware who her visitor was—her experienced ear required not so plain an evidence as the sound of a footstep to distinguish any person she had known before. Turning her face towards his, she said, smiling—"Well, good Ralph, what ails you, that you keep silence?"

"Why, pretty Annot, I will tell you," quoth the fool, with a ludicrous expression of cunning—"it was only two days agone that I was beaten for speaking like a fool, and I am now trying whether I shall have better luck by keeping silent like a wise man."

"Beaten, Ralph!" said Annot, "and why were you beaten?"

"That's quite beyond my skill to tell. I merely prayed for a long life and a merry reign to our good Queen Mary."

"And who in the loyal house of Sir Thomas Granville would refuse to join in so proper a prayer?"

"It was the loyal Sir Thomas Granville himself!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed."

"Then, Ralph, I doubt that you have not told me all."

"Well, Annot, as you know you have promised to be my lady when I come to my great estate, there must be no secrets between us; so I'll tell you all about it. Well, you must know, our knight was sitting in his justice-room examining two poor old grandmothers as to whether they liked flesh or bread best."

"Hush, Ralph! I cannot hear you speak profanely of the blessed sacrament. Sir Thomas, then, was examining suspected Christians—I mean, heretics."

"Yes. Well, he was just sending them to a very warm, but somewhat narrow lodging, near my lord chief-justice's house in the Old Bailey, when I thought of what I had seen in my young days, Annot, when you were the pretty little blind girl, not the pretty blind maiden; and I prayed for our gracious Queen Mary."

"Well?"

"Well, our knight would make me tell why I prayed instead of the chaplain; and I said that when I was a boy, and our good Queen's father's grace was king, they used to burn all good Christians that would not curse our holy father the Pope; and I thought that if Queen Mary's majesty—God bless her!—should die, Lady Elizabeth would be queen, and she, perhaps, would

bring in the old fashion again, and requite on the good knight the benefit he was bestowing on the poor old women. And, do you know, the unmannerly knaves set up a laugh; and the knight sent me into the court to be whipped. But I don't mind, Annot; Lady Anne, bless her sweet eyes! gave me this silver groat — and silver is your right famous healer of sores."

"Oh, Ralph! Ralph!" said Annot, hastily, "you are a sad gossip; and I am almost as bad, to sit here so long hearkening to your wicked mischief, without asking after dear Lady Anne."

"But, my pretty Annot, you have not asked concerning me yet; and by Saint Solomon, the patron of us wise men, you get no talk of me about Lady Anne until you welcome me!"

"Oh, but, Ralph, you know I am always glad to see you! Alack! I speak with the tongue of the world, and say, 'I see,' when

I only hear and feel. The poor blind girl is always glad to speak to any one that loves her, and I am sure you love me, Ralph."

"Love you, my pretty Annot! yea, that I do, heartily."

"Well, then, tell me how fares good Lady Anne?"

"Nay, how can she be better than what I told you—she has just given me a silver groat?"

"Nay, Ralph, you are worse than ever; I cannot get a clear answer from you. But, good Ralph, how is this—just night-fall and you here? How is it that you are so far from home at this late hour?"

"Why, do you know, I heard great talk that his lordship's reverence the Bishop of London was to pass this way, plentifully provided with fuel for glorious bonfires in Smithfield for months to come, and as the knight went to meet him down at Barnet,

and the serving-men at the wicket gate two miles hence, I thought I would slip down to you, and have my share of the sight."

"And where is Lady Anne?"

"Oh! she—she—don't tell on me—she is half a heretic herself; for when Sir Thomas desired her to go with him to Smithfield to-morrow morning, to see those stubborn heretics roasted, she shut her eyes and ran away to her apartments, and refused to go."

"And where is she?"

"Oh! at home; she likes not the Bishop. But, by'r Lady! I would I had your eyes, or that I belonged to a race of the blind; for while I can scant discern the hue of mine own hand you handle your needle as if you had a sun invisible to this generation."

"Yes, Ralph, I thank God that there are advantages in blindness; and though I may not be so happy as to look on the dear faces of my friends, I can labour for my poor

mother as well by night as by day, which is a great benefit in the winter season, when we find it so hard to come by the chandler's wares. But, my good Ralph, I hope you have not told me all. Did Lady Anne send me no message?—for you are a sad teaze to Annot — and keep your messages to the last."

"Nay, I came of mine own will," said the fool.

"And you here, Ralph, a mile from home! Surely you will greatly anger the Lady Anne and her father. Good even, Ralph; hasten home. You see the city roads even are bare."

What Annot said was true; the citizens and their wives no longer came up to the Cross, and looked along the road towards the country as they turned. The last had departed several minutes, after lingering somewhat beyond the usual time in expectation of the cavalcade from the country

towards Barnet, mentioned by Ralph, which promised to be more than commonly interesting.

The Right Reverend Bishop of London had gone, some days previous, on a partial visitation-tour through his diocese, in obedience to the special command of Queen Mary, to examine certain heretical parishes in Essex; and as all his visitations were attended with results affecting the prosperity of every inhabitant of England, his forth-going and in-coming were watched and speculated on by the great body of people who lived immediately within his influence, as on that which in some measure related to themselves either for good or for evil. Very great was the wonder of the honest citizens as the night came on, and the bishop did not appear; for not only were all the stages of his journey duly announced beforehand, but it was matter of universal knowledge that the grand cere-

mony to be performed on the morrow was one at which his lordship was to be present, and which he would not miss for anything short of money. The punishment by the secular power of five persons who had refused to acknowledge the converting power of the bishop's logic and wrath, was a ceremony exquisitely grateful to his piety as well as to his passions; and so fully did our good citizens depend on seeing him, that they waited on the high road half an hour later than usual, until in fact the sun was near setting before they turned their faces and hastened their steps towards the city.

The fool glanced along the four high roads that met at that corner, and seeing them entirely bare, with the exception of the road into the city, towards which the citizens were hastily walking, turned his face towards his own home with some degree of fear, for courage was by no means

his favourite virtue, although the persecution to which he was sometimes subjected when out of the protection of the household, put him into situations where that virtue would have been useful. But before Ralph could decide on making a bold push for home, or which was more likely, confessing his embarrassment to the blind girl, the sound of horsemen was heard on the northern road, and he turned towards it, as eager as a child, in expectation of beholding the sight he was about to despair of witnessing.

There was nothing very imposing in the procession as it appeared at the cross roads, even with the aid of the beautiful red twilight. A dozen horsemen, whose various ranks might be guessed more correctly from the quality of their horses than from their own garb, as it was now protected from the dust by cloaks of nearly similar quality, did not form a group which would have arrested

the attention of a lover of the picturesque. But those who knew the persons or the names of the party, and the object of the journey, would have found a moral interest more powerful than the romantic interest of the finest group of courtiers hawking in the forest-glades, or of warriors encamped on the battle-field. Two slight horsemen, on light active steeds, came first; next to them, two heavier persons, on larger animals, and wearing pointed hats instead of round ones; then a pair on humble hard-trotting steeds; after whom, two men without cloaks, on very wretched looking hacks, with a horseman well mounted on either side of each of them; and a couple behind, apparently the counterpart of the first. As they came in front of the cottage, one of the second pair of horsemen called a halt, in a loud and rough tone, and they all stopped—the two first turning their horses' heads towards those immediately behind

them. After a short consultation, one of the first rode to the porch of the cottage, and rapping heavily with the head of his whip, called—

"Within there—ho!"

"What is your pleasure, master?" asked Annot, coming forward.

"Are not yonder the lights of London before us?"

"Yes."

"Are we come to Islington, or how far are we from it?"

"This is Islington," said Annot. "The church is yonder, across the meadow."

"And how comes it," cried the person who had first spoken—"how comes it, that there is no one here to meet us?"

"Please you," said Annot, "his reverence the minister stayed at the Cross until evening, when he departed."

"Minister, wench!" cried the horseman; "whom dost thou mean?—art thou a heretic?"

"Nay, master; I trust I am not."

"Well, then, why dost thou not say the priest?"

"His reverence," said Annot, without noticing the latter words—"his reverence departed at night-fall, thinking that your worships had tarried till the morrow."

"He thought! he thought!—by our blessed Lady, I will see to it whether he shall dare to think! Does he think that his superior is to come into his parish unattended, like a groom? By the mass, I'll dare be sworn he is no better than the heretical trash we have tied to our steeds here, and who have kept us beyond our time!"

"Peace, brother!" said his companion, in the quivering tones of old age; "time presses, and we may not reach home to night if we do not hasten."

"Tell me then, woman, how we may soonest arrive at Fulham," cried the other;

" these flinty roads—the curse of God on them!—have jaded our horses, and to go through London were to lengthen our journey, and hazard our lives among the ruffianly apprentices. Find us a guide, or shew us the shortest way to Fulham."

Annot, as might be expected, knew but little of the country beyond her own village, and she turned to her companion, who, with all his folly, sometimes conversed as reasonably as another man. Ralph, thus addressed, stood forth from his concealment, and accosting the serving-man, said—

" Your worship wishes to know the shortest way to Fulham?"

" Yes, speak quickly!"

" I am not a great traveller, worthy sir," said Ralph, " although I do daily adventure from my chamber to the kitchen, and from the kitchen to my chamber; but I can tell you the nearest way to Fulham."

" Well, knave!"

"Your worships have only to get the Queen's majesty to send you to her prison of the Marshalsea, and her successor will send you to Fulham."

"What meanest thou, by that, villain?" was cried in an imperious manner by the rough voice that had first spoken.

"I cry your honour's pardon," said the fool, in great terror, "I meant no offence to your honour. But all that I know of Fulham is, that Ned Bonner lives there, and that the Queen's majesty took him out of the Marshalsea, and put him there."

"Right aptly and bravely spoken," cried one of the persons guarded. "Blessed be the man that dares to brave the cruel and bloody oppressor to his face."

"Peace there, knaves!—stop that villain's tongue, or pluck it from his jaws!" roared the man with the loud harsh voice.

"Yes, you may stop the tongues of the Lord's saints, or pluck them forth, but He

shall suddenly smite thee, thou evil man, in such wise that neither Fulham palace nor the Marshalsea prison shall protect thee. The gallows in West Cheap——"

"Ye rascal slaves!" cried the other, striking his servants with all his might with his heavy horsewhip—"ye rascal slaves, do ye hear me? Will ye not silence that heretical caitiff? Soon enough will it be for his preaching when he standeth at the stake in Smithfield."

The serving-men drew cords from their pockets, and while they were fastening them across the prisoners' mouths, in such a manner as to prevent the possibility of their speaking, the master urged his horse nigh the porch, and cried—"Now bring me forth this foul-mouthed cur, who dares to bark at his bishop. Let him look on Ned Bonner, the Bishop of London, face to face; and, by the Mother of God! he shall be a brave man to say so much."

"Nay, brother Bonner," said the same mild person, who had spoken before, "we shall hardly reach Fulham to night, and all our dangers will be increased if we loiter to quarrel with these wretched peasants."

"Tush, brother Tonstall!" was the reply; "you shall go to my house at Paul's with an escort, if you fear the journey to Fulham. Let me tell you, you are somewhat lukewarm in your zeal for the church. But, by the living God, I will not stir till I have looked into this matter; for I promise you, I believe this shall prove as pretty a batch of treason as hath been discovered this many a year. Come forward, you, within yonder porch."

As the Bishop said this, Annot Palmer went forward, and standing before him, said in a humble tone—"I beseech your lordship not to be wroth with this man—he meaneth no offence."

"Oh-ho, wench! I warrant me thou art a rare one to be in porches, and where not,

with men after sunset. I fear thou wilt come to the cart's tail."

"Good my lord, I crave your lordship's charitable opinion. I am not what you think me; and I dare promise that the poor man would not willingly offend your lordship."

"You dare promise, wench! and what heed should I give to your promise? Never trust me, if I do not take thee for one of these traitorous heretics. Bid the man stand forth!"

Thus commanded, Ralph moved towards the entrance of the porch, when Bonner exclaimed—

"Now, sirrah, what hast to say about the Marshalsea prison? I am thy man."

"I crave your lordship's pardon—I meant not to offend your lordship," said Ralph, trembling with fear, "and truly sorry I am I did not keep the tongue of a wise man silent in my head, that your lordship

might have gotten by without troubling me."

"What, sirrah knave! thou fearest to meet thy Bishop, dost thou? I'll make thee fear to some purpose, if thou dost not rightly answer what I shall ask!"

"And it please your lordship"—Annot commenced, when the Bishop exclaimed—

"Peace, peace! thou naughty wench! leave thy paramour to shift for himself. I will come to thee presently, and be sure I will give thee enough to do to answer me."

"I pray your good lordship not to hurt pretty Annot," interrupted the fool, with great earnestness—"I assure your lordship and all worthy gentlemen, that she follows the good fashion, and holdeth by Queen Mary, and the Pope, and King Philip, and reads not the Common Prayer."

"Peace, knave, and answer me!"

"But your good lordship will promise not to hurt our pretty Annot, for she comes of a good stock."

"Wilt thou be silent, knave?"

"Nay, my lord, you will be glad to hear that Annot is daughter of Abraham Palmer, that you and good King Henry burnt because he went along with his mother to mass; so in my poor opinion——"

"Knaves, knaves there! unsling your carabines, leave your horses, and haul me out that devil's brat into the road, and my horse's hoofs shall trample him into hell!"

"Nay, nay, brother Bonner——"

"Brother Tonstall, I will not be gainsaid in this matter. Shall I be mocked and scoffed before mine own grooms? Out with the traitorous heretic there."

While his reverend lordship was saying this, the serving men had sprung from their horses and rushed into the porch, and now reappeared, dragging the offender by the collar of his doublet into the full moonlight, when the Bishop, perceiving the gay colours of poor Ralph's dress, exclaimed—

"Heyday, my masters, whom have we

here. Are we at the May-day gambols, or what mummery is this?"

"Nay, my lord," replied Ralph, consequentially, "I am no Friar Tuck—your lordship's belly would better suit that character. Neither am I——"

"Giles! Edward! fasten me this knave to the belly of your horse. I will see whether I am to abide his gibes," cried the Bishop, as he heard his prisoners laughing at the fool's foolish reply.

"And it please your lordship, it is only a poor fool—one that hath lost his way from the neighbouring castle," said one of the serving men.

"Truly, it is," rejoined Annot. "A fool that lives hard by—Sir Thomas Granville's fool, an't please your lordship."

"And what art thou, wench, that consortest with pestilent fools like this, who, I'll be sworn, is more knave than fool?"

"Nay, brother Bonner," said Bishop

Tonstall, "I pray thee let us not tarry for this trash. The fool doth but speak after his vocation, and we may not expect words of wisdom from him. Sir Thomas Granville, his owner, is a loyal servant of the Queen's majesty, and a brave man that will not suffer his toy to be spoiled."

"Hold the fool straitly in thy grasp, Giles," cried Bonner, "until we see fit to dismiss him presently with a whipping; but I must speak to the woman. Now, thou light wench, didst thou set on yonder fool to utter his ribald speech?"

"Nay, my lord, I would not willingly give matter of offence even to mine enemy."

"Enemy! dost thou say, I thy Bishop am thine enemy?"

"No, my lord. I mean I would not offend."

"Woman, I grievously suspect thee. Before I am many days older, I will make a narrow inquisition of this parish of Islington,

and, I tell thee that if I am assured of what I now grievously suspect, thou shalt go with these men, now bound on my horses, to bear testimony in Smithfield. What is thy name?"

"Annot Palmer, my lord."

"Then, Annot Palmer, remember what I have told thee; and now say which is our nighest road to Fulham?"

"My lord, I can direct you to Paddington, further than which my knowledge doth not extend; but your lordship's servants——"

"Direct us to Paddington then!"

"You will please to keep yonder road until you come to a left hand turning, which you will follow until you come to a horse-track across the common."

"Horsetracks and commons, woman! whither wouldst thou guide us? dost thou know the way thyself?"

"Yea, perfectly."

"Then, Giles, dismiss that fool with a

stroke of thy whip, and take the wench in thy lap——"

"Nay, my lord, I cannot find the road on a horse."

"No! Marry, what new trick is this? Why canst thou not direct us on a horse?"

"I am blind, my lord—stone blind; and taken from my feet, I have no means of telling whither I go."

"Brother Bonner, listen to me a moment," said Bishop Tonstall; "if we stop to dispute with fools and blind girls, we shall fall a prey to the robbers that infest these roads. I pray you let us make all speed towards Fulham; and we can examine these people another day."

"But how are we to proceed without adventuring through London."

"Good, my lord," said Annot; "there is a man in the village that worketh for us, a poor faithful man; I will find him if it please you, and he will put you in a right track."

"Hasten then, good maiden," cried Ton-

stall; "and inform this man that travellers have lost their way, and that he shall be well paid if he come quickly."

Annot immediately set off at her greatest speed towards the church, that was now peeping out bright and sharp in the white moonlight; and Dr. Bonner, somewhat disappointed at the result of this examination, commanded the man that was still holding Ralph, to bring forth the fool that he might look on him. Ralph was immediately brought forward, when the Bishop said—

"Now, thou traitorly knave, say who set thee on to this idle and heretical talk?"

"Nay, I am not set on to speak, my master; for I am whipped or cudgelled daily for speaking."

"And right well dost thou deserve it, I promise thee," was the reply; "and I will take care that thou gettest a taste of both before we part."

"I cry you mercy," replied Ralph;

"my master will not suffer his villains to cudgel me."

"And dost thou call me one of his villains? Giles, lay thy whip sharply over this bundle of finery!"

"Nay, my brother," again interposed Tonstall, "let me crave the fool's pardon: he surely knoweth not what he sayeth; and to punish a fool will not greatly add to your fame. Besides, you know Sir Thomas Granville is a knight of trust and worth, and none such will allow their knaves, especially such an one as this fool, to be lightly beaten."

"I thank your good worship," replied Ralph; "and I thank the Virgin that I am only a fool."

"Why thankest thou the Virgin for thy misfortunes?"

"It seemeth to me, my lord, that men who have brains run themselves into fire, as witness the two men who are behind you;

but I that am a fool am never threatened with anything worse than a whip."

"And dost thou say, man!" shouted Bonner, "that these—these accursed and damnable heretics have brains?"

"Nay, my lord, if they have not, I would advise your reverence to use them as you use a fool like me, whip them and let them go."

"You hear," said Tonstall, "that this poor silly creature doth but prattle such stuff as it would be idle for us to mark. But yonder, or I mistake, is the blind maiden, and the man she spoke of."

Bishop Tonstall was right. Annot was coming, accompanied by the man, a middle-aged and rather deformed person, who had laboured for her family many years. He offered at once to shew the horsemen a short road to Paddington.

"Ride on, I pray you, gently, all of you, besides Giles," said Bonner; "I have a parting word to utter to this woman."

The party did at once as requested, and left the Bishop with Annot and his man Giles, who still held Ralph by the shoulder.

"Now, thou wench," said Dr. Bonner, "I tell thee I grievously suspect thee of disloyalty and heresy, and I would have thee mind; and, besides, tell the curate of this parish that I will shortly visit him, and if he do not thoroughly purge himself of his neglect to his bishop, I will have him down from his pulpit into my gaol; and see, too, that thou art prepared, for I will make a strait examination of all the people. Now go thy ways. And thou, Giles, smite me the knave roundly over the shoulder with thy whip, and get to thy horse."

But before this command could be executed, Ralph, with a sudden jerk, loosed himself from the serving-man, and springing lightly over a fence, fled across the fields too nimbly to be overtaken; and the Right Reverend Bishop of London rode on with his servant to join his party.

CHAPTER II.

Dr. Bonner told Annot, the blind girl, to go her way, and she was not slow in obeying him, since neither from general report of the bishop's character, nor from the present specimen of his manners, had she any reason to wish the interview prolonged. But though the sun had now disappeared, and the summer moon was high in heaven, declaring the lateness of the hour, she did not go into the house and shut-to the door, as a modest and timid maiden might be expected to do at such a time. After stand-

ing a few minutes, listening to the lessening tramp of the horsemen, no sooner was she assured that they had all departed, than she sprang lightly across the road, and opening a wicket gate in the hedge, went through, and ran down the fields until she came into the churchyard. She listened again, as though there were danger of pursuit; but being assured that no human being was on her track, she walked more deliberately up to a little white house that looked on the churchyard, and rapped at the door. When it was opened, she said to the servant —"My good Margery, is Master Parson within?"

"No, Annot," was the reply, "but you shall walk in and take a horn of ale, and wait for him—he will be here anon."

"Nay, good Margery, I may not wait. My mother will want me, and I must see your master now. Tell me where he is."

"He hath gone to widow Allen's, down

by the road side; and much I fear me the old woman is hard beset; for the good man took his book of prayers and a bottle of wine under his cloak."

"Then I will go to him," said Annot.

"Nay, my pretty Annot," replied Margery, "you must not go alone. I will go with you, anon. Come in while I don my cloak—alack, what would you do by yourself on these roads?"

"Thanks, good Margery," said Annot, "but fear not for me, I will go alone. I am blind, 'tis true; but the affliction which deprives me of many pleasures hath this good, that it shields me from the violence of wicked men. Nobody would harm a poor blind girl like me."

Thus saying, Annot bade the serving-woman farewell, and bounded across the churchyard into a lane, down which she ran at her utmost speed, nor slackened her pace until she stood before widow Allen's

door. She rapped gently with her hand, and the woman who opened the door, knowing Annot, asked her to walk in, and led her up stairs to the sick chamber.

The sight which that chamber displayed was one of the commonest to a true shepherd of his flock, though one of the most solemn and awful that the circumstances of the world create—a human being preparing to meet God. The very sight of the two persons in that room would have stricken the boldest heart with awe, and silenced the bitterest of scorners. The sick woman gasping for breath, and too weak to converse, and the young minister divested of all priestly robes, clad merely in the hose and jerkin common to all ranks, had in their utter simplicity a power derived from their relation to each other, which was immeasurably above all the pomps and ceremonies of courts and churches. Annot could not see—but she could hear, and her imagina-

tion supplied so much of what her eyes missed, that the faint muttering of the minister, as she entered the room, stifled the salutation that was rising to her lips, and she sat in a corner to wait until the awful scene had ended.

"Dost thou believe that thou art a sinner?" said the minister.

"Yea, I do," replied the woman.

"Dost thou repent?"

"Yea, heartily."

"Dost thou believe that Jesus died to bear thy sins?"

"Yea, I have none other trust."

"Then take this bread which is broken, and this wine which is poured out, even as his body was broken, and his blood was poured out."

"Shall I drink the wine, indeed?"

"Yea, woman, the wine as well as the bread. I give them to thee as Christ gave them to his disciples; but beware that thou

esteemest not that they shall save thee. Unless thou repentest, these shall not avail thee, but they shall condemn thee; if thou canst take them humbly as a sign that thou repentest and dependest where only a safe dependence may be had, then thou shalt go thy way rejoicing, and, poor as thou art and lowly, the proudest of this world shall rejoice to end their course like thee; for thou shalt be blessed for evermore. Let us pray!"

The minister did not use the ritual of the Romish church, nor the book of Common Prayer. The only book he had was the Bible, in which he was reading when Annot entered the room; and now, in the ceremony of prayer over one of his flock, it appeared that he disdained to use even the book of Common Prayer, or any formula prepared by other persons, while his Christian passions could dictate petitions adapted to the case, and pour them out with a fer-

vency which could not be employed on written words. The minister knelt down by the bed-side, and with the utmost vehemence compatible with a low and suppressed tone, burst forth into prayer; Annot kneeling also in the further corner of the room. The prayer was not perhaps in the purest taste, nor such as would have borne to be written. The want of direct connexion, and the sudden exclamatory passages rendered it as unfit to be read as impressive to be heard. It commenced with a fervent petition for the general good of the world, comprising most of the passages of Scripture bearing on the subject, then it besought the good of the church, and denounced its oppressors, and finally implored salvation for the departing sinner. "Save thy church, O Lord of Hosts!" he exclaimed; "they be many that rise up against her, and she is but a child driven into holes and corners to hide herself from a world that

cannot endure the glory of her countenance. Arise, arise quickly, and put down the oppressor! Let his bow be broken—let his harness be weak—let his sword be frail; and do thou smite him terribly—utterly, as the children of Israel smote the people of Shalem. Let their place be empty—let their race be cut off—let them go into everlasting, and universal, and total perdition; and let the toad and the snake, and all loathsome and venomous things creep about and infest the place which they occupied. But the persecuted child, do thou take under thy care; nourish and feed her, and make her grow up into a glorious maturity, and take the place of the judge and the lawgiver, and the monarch, and let her dominion be equal to the limits of the world, and her subjects be the people—yea, all the people of all tongues, and climes, and colours, —so shall the world offer up a praise worthy of thy wondrous name.

"Lo! Almighty God, here lieth a soul in the flesh that in a few moments shall be with thee, would that I might speak to thee through her as a messenger from earth to heaven! Would that she might bear unto thee the groans and cries of thy people in bondage! But I thank thee for her. Prayer for her is too late. She dies: she hath chosen, and must abide by her choice. I thank thee that thou hast taken her from the worse than Egyptian darkness that prevaileth on the earth, from the heathenish ceremony and fleshly dependence; else, O Lord, she had been lost for evermore. Receive her, O Father, receive her as one that hath repented, that hath trusted, that hath no other, and craveth no other hope but thee."

"Yea, Lord, receive me!" the sick person muttered, and a shadow stole over her face.

The minister arose from his knees, and looking into her face, said—"She is with God!"

The waiting woman came forward to perform the last decent offices for the dead; and the minister went down into the open air, followed by Annot.

"Dear sir," she said, after walking a few hundred yards in silence—"dear sir, much I fear there is danger near you, and I come to warn you."

"Danger, Annot!—of what kind?" inquired the minister, with an even voice.

"Doctor Bonner, the Bishop of London, with Dr. Tonstall and others, passed the Cross at nightfall, and not meeting you there, threatened to come on an early day to this parish, and make a rigorous examination of all the people."

"Let him come," said the minister—"I am prepared to meet him. I will abide his examination, and I will not fear it."

"Yea, worthy sir, you will abide it; and I will, if so unworthy a creature as I may be called to bear testimony; but, sir, con-

sider the people that love the truth here—what shall become of them if you are taken away, and Dr. Bonner putteth one of his priests to take charge of your people?"

"Yes, Annot, I have considered it long and earnestly; but God, and not I, must care for the people. I am a man as well as a minister; and the duty which I owe to the truth I cannot give up for the welfare of my flock. I have a soul to be saved as well as they; and when I am called on for my testimony, I shall deliver it, even in the fire, and the people must trust in their own hearts, and in God, and be faithful."

"Yea, sir, it is true; but I fear ——"

"Nay, fear not; be bold, and trust."

"Alack, sir! we may be bold, and we may trust, and we may go to the fire; but that is not all. The Word of God must be read; and who shall read it to us if you be taken away?"

"Why this passion, gentle Annot?"

"Oh, sir, I speak for my dearest concern. You know my mother, who is bed-rid, whom I labour for day and night that she may not want—she will not abide God's Word, but will have the mass-book read to her daily. How shall I ever hear that holy Word if you are taken? Dr. Bonner had two men prisoners with him on his horses; and one of them, by his speaking, I judged to be a poor parson near Barnet, one of Dr. Cranmer's parsons, and the other that spoke not I knew to be a poor man unto whom many times and oft I gave pence to read the good book in the porch, and the Bible in the chancel."

"How art thou sure that this was the man if he spoke not?"

"It was the man, I dare be sworn—I knew him by the sigh he uttered, and I would have spoken, but that I thought if I spoke then I should be carried away, and

my poor mother would perish, as her life dependeth on my labour."

"Thou doest well to be cautious. These are times when every caution is required, so long as we do no shame to our vocation. It is a dangerous world for the good to walk in when the wicked are enthroned in power. I also have laboured diligently to bear myself unsuspected; and if I may do so uprightly, I will continue. I have not been licensed by the present government to preach; and I will not ask to be licensed, because Dr. Cranmer had full power to license me for life, unless kings and bishops may change men's consciences. I shave my face even as the Roman priesthood, and I abstain from publishing my opinions beyond the limits of this village. Thus I am as cautious as my conscience will suffer me; but I neglect the commands of the present church. I have not taken away the Bible from the church—I have not extinguished the holy texts from

the walls—I have not put up a rood, and a pix, and a sculpture of Mary, all of which things I have been commanded to do. I must be seized one day; and if the Bishop had seen our church this day, I should now be in his prison at Fulham, or in Newgate. I do my duty to my poor flock, as I swore to do, and I will not desert them so long as I may remain with them with a safe conscience; but the time is coming when the utmost caution will not avail, but would be treachery and apostasy; and then I pray God I may not be found wanting."

"I pray that we may all be bold for the truth; but pardon me, sir, if I ask you to consider what I have told you, and that Dr. Bonner will come to visit you."

"Let him come, Annot—let him come—I will meet him. I have said I am cautious, and I advised you to take heed; and it will be well that you save yourself, for women and children may well escape. But

I confess to you, my child, that my heart hath many times been sad, and my conscience pierced through and through by a fear that my caution is apostasy. For why should I keep myself free, through cunning, when so many better men are imprisoned?—why doth my tongue break into denunciations against these enemies of God's truth when I kneel to pray, while all my care is to preserve a smooth face to the enemy when he approacheth me. I will do so no longer. Away with cunning and craven cowardice! The world shall know me what I am! Nor will I crouch before this wolf, who hath seized, and is about to lap the blood of my dear master, the blessed and holy saint who dedicated my life to God."

"Dr. Cranmer hath done well," said Annot. "No bitter friar or monk within the walls of Oxford can say that he is now a coward; but, dear sir, speak not of him as a holy saint, nor hold him up to be vene-

rated—many and great are his sins to man and God; and we may look on his death only as on that of Bonner, if the Lord should turn his heart."

"Thou knowest not what thou sayest, Annot. This Bonner hath not one of the virtues which were by thousands in the heart of Cranmer; and whatever his faults, he was kind to me—he taught me—and I loved him. To think that this Bonner—an ignorant and bloody persecutor—hath such rule in the church and realm, I wonder that some bold and sturdy Englishman doth not stab him as he goeth through the streets."

"I pray that such may not be—deeds of violence may not aid the holy cause."

"Yet who a more violent and bloody king than Henry, who introduced the true faith?"

"Truly he was. He was perjured while a Roman—he has been a bloody persecutor as a Lutheran; and no man or woman

loveth that murderer; and surely our faith hath laboured under hard suspicion through him. It may be that God will bring good out of evil, yet surely, dear sir, we may not pray for that evil to come."

"Evil!—evil in striking down the murderers of God's servants—the pullers down of his church—the defilers of his sanctuary! Evil!—are they not the enemies of God, and of his religion, the choicest possession of man? Would that the judgment would fall on them. May their houses be desolate, themselves in bonds and tortures, and may I see it while my hair hath the blackness of youth."

"Dear sir!" cried Annot, "surely your reverence hath forgotten that sweet chapter of the holy Word which you read to me a few days agone, where we are commanded to forgive those that persecute us, and rather do them good than evil?"

"Yes, Annot, poor girl! I can forgive all

my particular and private wrongs; but these are wrongs to God, whose servant I am, and I am bound to do for the glory of God what I would not do for myself."

"Alas, sir, what are all the men in the world to avenge the wrongs of the great God? The lightest touch of his wrath would be heavier than the arms of all Christendom. Dear sir, the sacred book teacheth mercy, and that is why the children of affliction love it. If it taught vengeance, it would be unregarded, since we are utterly unable to inflict it: but indeed nothing can be so truly God's word as the commands of mercy; for mercy never erreth; but while you strike down the most grievous persecutor of the saints, perchance you strike one that God had willed to repent and find mercy."

"Thy reproof is just, my gentle friend, and yet my anger is not unjust," replied the priest; "for while I would strike the foe, I would go patiently into the flames lighted

for me; whilst thou, who wouldst shew him mercy, wouldst hide thee from him. The difference between us is, that I am a man and thou art a woman."

"Nay, sir, that is not all. I too am prepared, if needful, to yield my soul to God amidst the flames; and yet the Bible telleth me not to curse, but to pray for those that despitefully use me, for Christ's sake, who can judge and punish more justly and thoroughly than all the children of men."

"I have taught thee, and now thou teachest me; and I thank God that thou art able to preach a nobler doctrine than mine own—even the charity which, standing above the commom altitude of the world, looketh down on the passions of men with the indifference of a superior nature."

"Alas, sir! such a one as I must be just; I can only hear God's Word, and think on it. The passions of the great and the

learned, and even of those happy persons that can see, affect not my mind. I must trust humbly in God, as I find his Word commands me; for what other help have I in all the world?"

"Well, Annot," said the priest, "with the help of God, I will school my tongue to prudence and my heart to meekness, that I may not offend these butchers of the saints; but I know not—this night even is a night of peril. The bitterness with which I spoke was not caused by a light thing, for my heart was bursting with grief. Thou knowest that five persons have been excommunicated this day, and are to be burned in Smithfield to-morrow. But thou dost not know that one of them is mine own familiar friend, and father in the faith—I must see him and them—the night shall not pass over without a word of love and admonition, if needful, from my lips, to those who are so soon to enter the presence of our

Lord, even if Bonner and the chief justice stood in the way to forbid me."

"Far be it from me, sir," Annot replied, "to pray you not to go; we must do our duty, and we are safe while we walk where God leads us. I myself would go into the prison, not to admonish, for such a creature as I would do ill to admonish, but to pray for those that are in danger. It is a terrible trial of faith when the stake, the chain, and the faggots are prepared, and a man hath only a word to say to be free; and surely at such a time the voice of God's ministers must not be stilled through fear."

"You say well, Annot; if the ministers of God's truth be silent when the foe is in power, what shall be their reward? even that of the soldier who turneth back at the drawing together of the battle. But we are at my gate. Hast thou anything more to say to me?"

"I came to tell you that Dr. Bonner

threatened to call shortly, and to beg you to be wary for the sake of the poor flock that dependeth on you. I have nought else to say—unless—unless——"

"What is it, maiden?—speak out boldly!"

"I am loth to take up your precious time," said Annot; "but what am I to do now that the poor man is in prison that used to read to me! Would your reverence read to me a little in the Bible?"

"Come in with me, Annot: of a truth I will both read to thee, and pray with thee, for God alone knoweth whether we shall meet again."

The minister went into his house, followed by Annot, whom he led into his own private room, and Margery, the maid-servant being called in, he took a folio volume from the couple of dozen which were his library, and opening it, read a considerable portion of St. Luke's Gospel, and then ordering them to fall on their knees, prayed

fervently for them, and for the church. Then he ordered Margery to fill a wooden bottle with ale for Widow Palmer, and slipping a silver penny in Annot's hand, went out of the house towards the city.

Annot turned her head in the direction of the path to London, with the intent and silent anxiousness with which a person watches a dear friend fighting his way through a scene of danger; and when she no longer heard his rapid footsteps, she left the house, and returned home.

The cottage at the cross was one of the bettermost kind of village cottages, equal in fact to the tradesmen's houses in second-rate streets of London; and probably the nearness of the city, as well as the trade of the Palmers, had been instrumental in giving the house a character somewhat above those belonging to, or occupied by labourers and working men. These Palmers through many generations had been net-makers, and the

cottage in which they lived had been built in the reign of Edward IV., nearly a hundred years back, by an ancestor, of the same occupation. Probably, the house and furniture, together with the bit of garden-ground, were not altogether worth ten pounds: but still they were their own, and had belonged to their forefathers; and everybody knows, that not only does a possession of the kind give a person an air of respectability or stability in the opinion of his neighbours, but one feels infinitely deeper the exquisite sympathies comprised in the word home, when that home is not hired, but an actual property, and one that has been the possession of one's father and mother. Nay, perhaps the feeling generated by proprietorship extends even to the more central portion of the heart, and mingles with the natural affections; for a parent who possesses in his own right a home, has one claim more on the reverence

of a child, than the parent who is liable at any moment to be turned from his fireside, and to have all the scenes altered and destroyed which were sanctified in the hearts of the children. Possibly, a feeling of this nature exercised an unacknowledged influence over the heart of Annot Palmer, in keeping her in profound and unchanging obedience to her mother, who, beyond that relationship, seemed to have little claim to more than common attention. Religion and the Word of God might have pronounced the duty in words; but nothing but love, proceeding from an uncommon sense of filial duty, could have given such a spirit of humble reverence to her obedience to a mother like hers. Not that Widow Palmer was a profligate, or careless woman, or that her life had been disgraced by crime: she might possibly have been a good and kind woman, and certainly her sufferings had been such as to atone for all light

faults. Her husband had been burned in Islington Fields, in the reign of Henry, for not abjuring his faith along with the majority of the great, the mighty, and the learned, but worshipping his God as his forefathers had done. The poor woman was left with a very young and helpless child, in disgrace superior to that attached to the family of a murderer; and shortly after, through incessant labour, losing the use of her limbs, she was confined to her bed, from which she was never again to arise unassisted: these personal sufferings, and anxiety for a child so destitute, may be well supposed to embitter a heart that has not more than an average amount of patience; but although the cause of such an infirmity of temper ought to command the respect and submission of children, every one who has had to bear it knows how hard it is to submit, and to give quiet answers to wrath and peevishness, which continually meet

you, while you are endeavouring to soothe and to comfort.

The cottage was utterly in darkness as Annot entered it, yet that made but little difference to her, whose ears and fingers supplied the place of eyes. She stepped lightly up the stairs into her mother's room, and, turning her ear towards the bed, listened for a moment, then struck a light and kindled some sticks on the hearth. There was not much worthy of remark in the room rendered visible by the fire-light, the furniture consisting only of a couple of chests of dark wood, carved throughout, which held the linen belonging to the family and served instead of chairs, and the bedstead of like material, of very substantial manufacture, the sides, the back, and the roof being of solid oak, the colour and the carving of which proved it to belong to a past generation. As the fire-light flashed through the room, a meagre and ghastly head was

raised above the bedquilt of needlework, which had lain there for half a century, and had been the pride of Annot's great-grandmother, and these words were uttered in a shrill and querulous tone:—

"Annot, wench, is that thou? Would to God my staff were here, I would pay thee for gadding!"

"It is I, dear mother," said Annot, mildly. "I have only been down to worthy Master Barker."

"And what hast thou to do with Master Barker at such a time of night as this? I warrant me thou hast been to meet thy lover."

"Alas! mother, lovers will never come to meet a blind girl like me. I hear the young men and maidens talk of love; but I may never know more."

"And more thou needest not wish to know: well would it have been for me if I had never listened to their leasing, for I

should not have thee to care for. And where is that knave Perkin, that he doth not come to see me?"

"Some travellers came by at nightfall, dear mother, and he went to guide them to Paddington."

"I doubt thou liest, Annot."

"Nay, mother."

"Then woe be to me that my people are fools! Surely he will be waylaid, and will be brought home on a board."

"Nay, mother, I trust not. The company he guided was numerous and armed; and Perkin is harmless and nimble, and I fear not but he will return safe."

"Thou art a fool! What had he to do with travellers? Why could they not find their own way?"

"They were strangers, mother; and they promised to pay him."

"Pay! Yes—that he may go and drink at the alehouse."

"Nay, my dear mother, I pray you do not speak so of Perkin; you know right well that he resorteth not to alehouses, but bringeth you every farthing he earneth."

"Hold thy prate, thou impudent girl! Hey day—and what art thou doing there at the fire?"

"Master Barker, mother, gave me a bottle of ale, and I am making a toast for you."

"Ale! ale! I warrant it is some such stuff as his swine refuse."

"No mother; if I may judge by the smell, it is right strong and mellow ale of March."

"Thou know it by the smell, thou false girl! Thou hast been tippling it, I can tell by thy saucy answers."

"Thou forgettest, mother, that I drink no ale; and if I did, surely, mother, I would bring it all for you who are sick."

"Why, wench, thou knowest that ale

doth me no good, and I don't like it, so you might as well have told Master Barker to keep it. Annot! Annot! take the pipkin from the fire, the ale will be marred if it be too hot."

Annot immediately poured the ale from the pipkin into an earthenware basin, sufficiently slow to let the spice settle; then she stirred a spoonful of honey into it, and handed it, with a slice of toasted bread, to her mother, who, although she "loved not ale," was by no means backward in accepting it.

"Annot, you idle wench, wouldst thou have me spill the mess over the bed?" the mother cried; "light me a candle."

Annot took a rush from a bundle hanging over the hearth, and fixing it in a little iron stand which held the rush, somewhat like pincers, lighted it, and set it on the chest by the bed. She then went down, and re-appeared with a piece of network of delicate fabric, and sitting down by her mother began to work.

"What now, girl," cried the mother, "art thou going to burn fire and candle all night, that thou sittest there when it is an hour past thy bedtime?"

"Nay, mother, this piece of work is for Lady Anne Granville, our good friend; and I would only wait till Perkin cometh home, for perhaps he will want a morsel of bread and a little milk."

"Bread and milk! bread and milk! nothing but eating and drinking. Ye will eat me out of house and home at last. Come to bed, I say, and leave the door; we have got nothing that thieves would take."

"I pray you, good mother," Annot replied, "let me work until Perkin cometh home, and I will tell you what Master Barker hath read to me in the good book."

"What good book?"

"The Bible, mother."

"The Bible! What have I to do with the Bible? I believe it is a bad book, and you and Master Barker are little better than heretics."

"Master Barker hath given me this silver penny as well as the ale, and I will buy you something nice to-morrow."

"Master Barker's ale is naught," said Widow Palmer, giving back the basin perfectly empty, "and if he gave thee a penny, I warrant thou earnedst it well."

"Nay, mother, I did nothing for it; the good man gave it to comfort you. Shall I tell you what he read about the birth of our blessed Saviour?"

"No—I tell you, girl, I know nothing about it. Repeat to me our Lady's Psalter, or some passages from the Golden Legend about the blessed saints, which your father used to read, if thou hast not forgotten."

"I have not forgotten, mother: but, if it please you, the Bible——"

"I know nought of the Bible!" cried the old woman, vehemently, "and I will not hear it. Is not that the book which good Father Ambrose said was accursed for us to read—

an outlandish book, fit for no good Christian, and the same that Cranmer the heretic thrust into the churches? Girl—girl—I fear me thou wilt come to a bad end! When I was a girl we did not crave to look at such things; we hearkened to the priest, and wanted no Bibles; but now, since that peevish brat Edward hath persecuted the holy priests and true Christian people, every idle wench and loon must read his Bible, and what not. Get me my rosary, you—you—I will hear you no longer! There will be no work done to-morrow, and we shall soon be turned out in the road to beg at the city gates."

CHAPTER III.

When Master Barker left his house in Islington to go to the King's Bench prison, he began a journey of no inconsiderable danger—one which no man, save a soldier, a ruffian, or a priest, would have undertaken. It was probable that the city gates were closed, in which case he would be compelled to follow the ditch from Holborn Bridge to Bridewell stairs, to procure a boat, and perhaps at this hour might have to examine all the landing-places as far as Charing or Westminster, before he could find one.

In both cases the journey was perilous.

In the city he would be liable at every turning to be stopped by the watch, and such an account as he could give of himself would assuredly not prevent his being detained until the next day. This danger he could not avoid by a careful selection of streets; for in the perfect darkness of the city, he could not be sure of finding his way, save by keeping in the greatest thoroughfares. And even if he could avoid the watch by continually walking in the black shadows of the houses, there was the danger of falling into the hands of robbers and cut-throats, with whom the courts and alleys abounded, and from which the best streets were not free. If he crossed the water beyond the walls, he was in tenfold danger, not only from the ruffians that infested the roads about Holborn and the banks of the river, but from those in Southwark fields, which he must cross to arrive at the prison.

Certain laws had filled the roads with robbers. The abolition of the feudal system had released the lords of the soil from the obligation of feeding the poor, who having nothing in the nature of a protecting law to look to, in their distress became beggars; and if then they wanted, they became robbers on the highway, breakers of houses, and murderers.

But besides this general wretchedness, Southwark had its peculiar wickedness, and the fields around were the most terrible part of the neighbourhood. The stews of Southwark had been infamous for more than two centuries; sometimes licensed, and sometimes threatened, they had never been put down, although a few years back Henry had erased the most notorious. The people were not destroyed, and they procured fresh habitations in the neighbourhood. This den of wickedness contained not only females—men of the like infamy abounded,

and watched through the lanes, through the High Street from the bridge, through St. George's Fields, and those of Southwark, by the water; and no man could pass uninjured, unless he could cut his way through with his sword.

These very positive dangers, whose magnitude was matter of the commonest notoriety, had very much less effect on Master Barker's mind than the shadows of a lively and fearful imagination might have created. Thinking on his friend in prison, danger was looked on not as it might affect his person, but as it might prevent his reaching his friend before morning; but even in that view he was very sensible of his perilous situation. He walked down the London Road with a hasty step, and with many a wary glance on each side into the fields, until he came to the first houses of Clerkenwell, newly raised on the right hand, where the occasional lights in the windows

somewhat assured him he was within reach of assistance, if not out of the way of an attack. But this road was always tolerably safe: poor persons only lived beside it; and the clear moonlight had been so unfavourable to attacks on travellers, and even to night-walkers, that Master Barker reached Smithfield without meeting a person.

That wide space of ground, nearly surrounded by houses and churches, was as quiet in the moonlight as the very meadows lying away towards Islington, and it was as bright: but the minister admired not the moonlight there or in the fields—the grotesque shadows and lights on the picturesque gables of houses amused him not—he saw nothing but a black spot on the swampy marsh, and this he looked at very long and earnestly, for it was the mark of a fire which a few days back had destroyed three humble Christian men.

Aroused from his contemplation by human voices among the cattle-pens, he hastily stepped up Giltspur Street, to the New Gate. It was open; but Master Barker saw that a number of watchmen were about it, and he dared not venture. After waiting a considerable time, and finding that the watch was likely to be permanent, he tried the court of St. Bartholomew's, from which there was a postern gate into Christ's hospital; and finding this fast, he turned down Cock Lane, by the Conduit in Snow Hill, over Holborn Bridge, and along Fleet ditch to the bridge. Near this bridge was an opening in the wall through which Master Barker hoped to enter the city without going to Ludgate; but this opening also, through which formerly there had been free access, he found guarded, in consequence of the daring attempts of Wyatt and other conspirators within the last two years.

There was now nothing for him to do,

but to go to Bridewell Stairs and endeavour to cross the water. But after groping his way through the filthy alleys in the precincts of the Bridewell, and hiding himself several times from swaggering ruffians prowling about the corners, when he found himself at the river-side, he appeared not much nearer the fulfilment of his object; for the boats were chained to the shore, and not a man was visible. Master Barker did not immediately leave the stairs. He did not wish to adventure towards the Strand, the scene of continual outrages; and besides, there was somewhat in the present scene that demanded more than a hasty glance. No object in the world sooner arrests the eye than a running stream—the first view of it makes a person pause to look steadily into it—and this was the king of streams. There was quietness in the very motion of that river—so steady, so regular, so vast. It was not a mere sluggish

motion: for the whole surface of the river was covered with waves, though so small that they still reflected every object above them. The broken fragments of the moon could be discerned far down in the grim depths of the water; the stars and the clouds were there too; the shadows of the houses were thrown out boldly to the middle of the river, and many a tree and white cottage shone out beautiful along the opposite shore. There was no sound save the rippling of the water, the distant rush of it through the bridge, and the challenges of the watch far off within the walls of the city.

This scene of repose struck to the heart of the minister. He could not help asking himself why day as well as night,—why the interior of houses as well as the exterior—why man as well as nature were not at rest? It seemed an amazing thing to imagine, that in such a scene as this, in houses that were not beyond the reach of his eye, there

should be men capable of condemning, men capable of executing, and men preparing to suffer. The beautiful world before him appeared but the deceitful covering of hideous cruelty and suffering.

While his mind was taking the same course of speculation as thousands had done before, have done since, and as the minds of good men will ever do while the face of nature is beautiful and the heart of man is wicked, he was aroused and startled by being addressed by a person whose approach he had not heard, and who on looking round he discovered to be a tall, bold-looking man.

"You choose a fair evening for your meditations, good sir," said the stranger; "though, trust me, the neighbourhood of Bridewell is not a spot where a man so late as this should turn his back against anything less substantial than a good wall."

"I mean no harm, and I fear none," Barker replied.

"Pardon me, good sir," was the answer; "I fear you were not bred at College; for our worthy doctors would tell you that your reply was not sound logic. It is as much as if a man should say, I fear no cold because I have given away my cloak; for I doubt that the man who meaneth harm is rather safer than the man who meaneth none."

"I will not dispute with you," said Barker, smiling; "but such a master of logic as you must needs know, that from your own words I gather that you are not altogether harmless, since you seem not to fear."

"Right aptly answered, man," replied the stranger; "but whether I intend harm or no, I am prepared to repel it. I keep my back to the wall, and my sword in my hand."

"I know not to fight," replied Barker. "If my innocency will not protect me, I

can endure; I came to these stairs hoping to cross the water, but I fear that I must adventure further."

"Knowest thou the way?" asked the stranger, sharply.

"Through fire," replied Barker, hastily.

"Come with me, friend, then. I will put you over the water."

The stranger took Barker's arm, and the two walked away in earnest conversation. They crossed Fleet Bridge, and went straight to Ludgate, where on knocking at the door they were immediately admitted. The stranger was well known to the watch, and was evidently loved as well as respected; for there was an air of jocularity in the address of the night-guardians, which shewed they were addressing a favourite, while it was utterly without the tincture of familiarity and rudeness of an address to an equal.

"Ho ho! Master Steynham," quoth one

of the lanthorn men; "we shall have sad work with the apprentices when your good worship goeth out and cometh in at such an hour as this."

"Nay, Williams," replied the other; "I trust thou wilt keep my secret. Thou knowest that not one of the council—nay, not one of the worshipful aldermen, nor the worthy Sir John Lyon, the mayor himself, keepeth better hours than I."

"Nay, Master Steynham," said the watch; "we never question a suspected man but he saith he is as good a man as my lord mayor. Your worship knoweth we are sworn to apprehend every man that giveth not good account of himself, and I wonder what his lordship would say in the morning——"

"I thank you, good fellow," said the other; "but I had rather go home than pass the night in your somewhat scanty chambers. But hark ye, good fellows, if

ye call on me in the morning I will give you as good a horn of ale—But ye knaves, I trow I need not praise the tap that ye know right well already."

"We will not fail to pay our duty to your worship——"

"The ale you mean, rogues!"

"We will do the duty of Englishmen by both," said the gallant watchman; "but your worship will not go unguarded?—A man shall go before you with a lanthorn."

"Are the streets still and the watch out?" inquired Master Steynham; when being assured that nothing had occurred during the evening, he declined attendance, and led Master Barker away.

About midway between the Gate and Paul's, Master Steynham turned down a lane on the right hand, drawing at the same time his sword from beneath his cloak. In those narrow streets the moon was invisible, and the men walked in utter darkness.

But Master Steynham knew his way well, and from sheer custom was able to guard his companion against the deep holes in their road and the dangers of the corners. Whenever he came nigh a turning he moved farther into the road to provide against a sudden assault, and though at several of the corners appeared a company of more than two or three lurking about, his stout tread and his bold challenge prevented an attack. Thus they went on safely down the hill by Paul's stairs, into Thames street, where they stopped. Steynham looked about in every direction cautiously for a few seconds, when he drew his companion into the deep shadows of the right hand, where they remained without speaking or moving for the space of several minutes. Both listened attentively; but the city was as still as a desert, and Steynham seizing Barker's hand dragged him hurriedly down a narrow passage into a house, and after traversing

several rooms, and opening several doors in perfect darkness, he at length introduced him to a scene as different as could be imagined from all that he had witnessed this evening.

The place in which Barker found himself was a large room, which, from many circumstances, he knew to be a warehouse for merchandise, though affairs of trade were not to be transacted in it now. The whole room was covered with benches, on which sat, cloaked and bearded, though not bonneted, very nearly five hundred men, together with a few women. These latter appeared a little agitated and fearful; but the men, both old and young, were resolute, and the two standing with drawn swords at the door, and the continual rattle of weapons, as the persons moved in their whispered conversation, shewed that if the assembly were dangerous or unlawful, they were prepared to defend themselves like true-born Englishmen.

But this meeting was not a bloody conspiracy, even if it were illegal: the men were harmless, even if they were traitors by the law: in the further end of the room was a pulpit, supporting a folio Bible, and lighted with a couple of candles; and if that pulpit and that book be not symbols of peace and love, then peace and love have no true symbols on earth. Master Barker walked forward, and entered the pulpit.

This scene the reader probably comprehends; if not, an explanation may be given. It cannot be supposed that, though the great majority of the mighty men of England had given in their adherence to all the various systems of Christianity introduced by the monarchs during the last twenty years, there were none that had consciences. The semi-protestantism of Henry, the pure protestantism of Edward, and the papistry of Mary, had found a vast proportion of the nation ready to receive them all in their turn; but

the vigorous preaching of the latter years of Henry, and of the whole of Edward's reign, had made an indelible impression on the lower orders, because their convictions were not counteracted by the suggestions of ambition. It was peculiarly among the lower orders that a rich established church failed to be effective. The endowments of the church made the clergy independent of their parishioners, whence they naturally clang to the class of society on an equality with themselves in station, in breeding, and in wealth. The indifference thus generated towards the poor, was certain to be returned by them, who, beyond all the respect they felt for riches and knowledge, were touched by the personal attention which went into their cottages and their domestic circumstances, and endeavoured to make them happy, while it strove to make them faithful.

In the present state of society this was

very deeply felt. The ministers in every parish had cultivated an acquaintance with each parishioner in his own house, while the priests had only compelled them to come to church, and to confession. This want of sympathy with the common worldly wants and circumstances of the poor, was more strongly against them than all the speculative points of theology in which they differed. The poor wanted in a priest, a friend, not a master. Thus the convictions or impressions of the poor were too strong to be overturned or repelled by the mandates of courts and bishops; and, having no authorized church in which to perform their devotions and encourage each other to persevere, they formed societies for private meetings, of which the present was one.

It may be just mentioned, in explanation of the scene at Bridewell Stairs, that Master Steynham had been looking out several hours for the arrival of a preacher, who, by

the way, was one of the men in Bonner's custody at the Cross, and, as he did not come, had strolled down to the water, by way of passing the time before he finally entered the city. Barker's mentioning that he carried no sword, suggested that he was of a religious order; and the words "Knowest thou the way?" and "Through the fire" were the challenge and the password lately agreed on between the congregation of Protestants, which, as it happened, Barker knew. It will be obvious, therefore, that as soon as this Shibboleth had been uttered, the two persons conversed freely with each other, and Barker was easily prevailed on to accompany the stranger into the city, to act as minister.

That house of worship was a very interesting sight: it was not adorned with the arches and the friezes of a temple; the walls were not supported by delicate columns, nor decorated with paintings, nor was the

room illuminated with a profusion of wax tapers — all the peculiarities of a place of worship were studiously avoided; for though, in belonging to a private house, and hanging over the water, it seemed to bid defiance to scrutiny, it was well known that the spy was indefatigable in his industry, and that a discovery would throw hundreds of families into distress. The room was lighted only by the two candles at the pulpit, and a few occasional gleams of the moon, so that it required to become accustomed to the twilight before one could discern the extremities of the room. That mass of plain-looking men, of all ranks below the highest, bore a general resemblance to each other; for they were all bare-headed, all bearded, and all cloaked, with the exception of a few too poor to buy them, and who came in their jerkins of leather or woollen.

Barker could not avoid gazing with interest on the mysterious scene, and feeling

somewhat elated to meet there five hundred plain but bold Englishmen, who, in defiance of monarchs and bishops, determined to worship God as their consciences dictated —who wished to worship in peace and quietness, but were prepared to defend their liberty and their religion like brave men. The minister then turned over the leaves of the Bible, until he had selected the portion on which he thought proper to dilate, and, having reflected on it for a few seconds, said—"Let us pray!" The whole of the assembly immediately arose, the men clapping their hands over their sword-hilts to avoid making a noise; and Master Barker proceeded to read from the book of Common Prayer, authorized in the last reign and forbidden in the present. In conformity with the instructions of Master Steynham, the minister spoke in a low voice, and the responses were uttered so inwardly, that while five hundred men were breathing a hearty

"Amen," the ripple of the Thames could be heard above it. Barker felt that religion could never die away from the land while there were such men to uphold it. It was not their courage or their devotion that gave him hope and made him confident: there were thousands in the nation bold as might be, as boldness was a national characteristic, independent of religion—there were thousands as devoted men who would die for their faith: his ground of hope was in the prudence of these men, who, while they faced danger in obedience to a high duty, endeavoured not to provoke unnecessarily the wrath of the enemy.

The devotions of this assembly were not limited to the ritual of Common Prayer: the vigorous preaching and hearty prayer of Edward's time, generated by a sense of escape from religious error, through the Reformation, had made such men as these somewhat discontented with forms: they

wanted the petitions that came from a zealous man's heart, and which related to their own peculiar situation and circumstances. When, therefore, the minister had read the preparatory prayers and the chapter appointed for the day, and closing his book, again said—"Let us pray!" the people addressed themselves to a more earnest and personal kind of supplication.

Some stood, and some knelt, and the position at first assumed was maintained till the end: but no one sat. The prayer was long, and though it was the prayer of a pious man, not of a political leader, and though earnest and suited to the times, it was entirely without inflammatory appeals to the congregation as oppressed citizens. When the "Amen" was said, and the men looked up, there were traces on every countenance of the earnest passion with which the minister had been followed.

His text was taken from the fifth chapter

of Matthew—"Ye have heard how it is said —an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever giveth thee a blow on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whoso compelleth thee to go a mile, go with him twain." In that age, sermons were generally familiar, and not unfrequently vulgar, addresses, rambling from one subject to another, without definite object, and abounding much more with quaintness and ludicrous images than with arguments in support of specific doctrines or incitements to virtue. But however Master Barker might generally follow the customs of his fellows, on the present occasion he was in a position which necessarily called forth a particular feeling: the secret midnight meeting, the congregation of strangers, the pitfalls that lay thick about them, made it

impossible to be familiar or humorous, or to speak to the people in any manner but that of a person anxious for their welfare. The preacher began by marking the difference between the old and new laws—the revenge of Jewish justice, and the forgiveness of Christian charity. The former he shewed to be the necessary law of a somewhat barbarous community struggling for existence, the latter that of a community whose existence was assured by the death of Christ, whose glory was to be furthered only by humility, patience, and mercy. Then he made a personal application of the principle to the present occasion, declaring, that though the people of God had been for ten centuries wanderers in the darkness of almost universal error, and now, when they were struggling to extend the light of their truth, were beaten down as much as the Israelites in the worst time of their distress, yet the sacrifice made for

them released them from the fear and the danger of the struggle; but they must fight with the weapons of peace and humbleness, not with the weapons of the flesh. "For," said the preacher, "what evidence can you give of the faith which not only is true, but is the only true one, if ye fight your battles with the weapons used in all common conflicts? If the rage of the oppressor disturb your temper, who shall judge between you? or if ye complain that the sword is stretched out against you, how shall ye dare defend yourselves with the sword? God's law commandeth not that ye put yourselves in the hands of the evil man, nor that ye incite him to do ye wrong; for in this ye tempt both man and God, and shall be answerable for the evil: ye are to be as prudent as the wicked; ye are to keep yourselves from danger, so long as ye do it without sin; but if ye fall into the power of the wicked, ye are to suffer—not smite.

For be sure that very shortly the whole world that oppresseth you shall be given into your hands."

At this point of the discourse one of the congregation arose and said, hurriedly, "Master Parson, behold, the Lord hath delivered one of the enemies into our hand. Yonder man, below you, is one of Bonner's men!"

At these words every man sprang from his seat, drew his sword, and looked doubtfully into the faces near him; but Master Barker raised his hand in the attitude of one about to speak, and the people remained quiet.

"My friends," said he, "beware of violence and riot. Sit you all down, save the man that hath spoken, and let him point out the enemy."

The man then moved towards the pulpit, examining every face as he passed, and at length stopped before a very sanctimonious-

looking personage, saying, "This is the man —he is one of Bonner's murderers!"

"Nay, good neighbour," replied the other, "thou mistakest. I came here to hear the word, as thou didst; and know nothing of Bonner. I pray thee let the good man conclude his exhortation."

"Art thou certain thou art not mistaken?" asked Barker, from the pulpit.

"Nay, Master Parson," replied the man, "I will swear this is the man I say. I saw him divers times troubling good Dr. Taylor, —I know him as well as mine own child. He drew his cloak over his face at first, like no honest man; but I saw it, and know him."

A murmur arose among the congregation, and a rattling of swords was heard, when Barker said, "Brethren, be not hasty; for we should sorely repent any ill done to a brother. There is an easy way to clear this subject. Let this accused man doff his cloak, take one of these candles in his hand, and look

around; if he be a brother, he will be known; and if he be not known, he is a foe!"

"Nay, good sir," said the suspected person, "it seemeth hard that I, a faithful brother of the gospel, should be subjected to such indignity as to stand a spectacle to the brethren."

"Thou art a false spy!" cried a person at the other end of the room, which, from its bold tone, Barker knew belonged to Master Steynham. "Thou art a spy, or thou wouldst not prate of thy dignity or indignity in a meeting like this, where we perforce turn day into night, like owls."

"True," replied a score of voices; "if he were a friend, he would not strive to conceal himself. Strip his cloak over his head!"

A dozen hands were on the cloak at once, but the man spared them the trouble of a struggle; for seeing matters arrived at this

extremity, he undid the fastening at the neck, and springing to the front of the pulpit, turned his back to it, leaving the cloak in their hands.

The true character of the man was now beyond a doubt. As he turned towards the people, he discovered a steel plate, covering the whole of his chest, below which, down to the knee, he was guarded with flexible armour, which impeded not his motions, though it was probably sword proof. He had a sword in his right hand, and a long narrow dagger in his left, and another shorter dagger hung at his belt.

"Now, my masters, what have you to say to me?" shouted this personage—"methinks your treatment of me hath not been over civil."

"Thou cruel and bloody persecutor! what dost thou here?" asked a hundred voices.

"Nay, my masters," quoth the stranger, "I should ask ye, what *ye* do here? for not

only am I an officer, who can enter where I list without challenge, save from a justice, but ye ought to know, that wherever a company is of such numbers as this, every man hath the right to enter. I ask ye, therefore, what ye do?—ye know right well that this assembly is utterly unlawful; and Master Parson there, who hath preached such a moving sermon, I dare be sworn hath not been duly licensed by the bishop of this diocese."

This mention of their bitterest and most loathed enemy filled every heart with wrath, and a movement of the whole mass was directed towards the spy. But he flourished his sword around him, saying, "Beware what ye do! let me depart, and no man shall be harmed; but I will defend myself."

Many a sword touched the one in the stranger's hand; but, seeing the necessary result of a struggle, and being by no means inclined to prove his courage at the expense

of his life, he uttered a loud whistle, dropped his sword, and allowed himself to be taken prisoner.

The man was instantly thrown on the ground and disarmed, and his legs and arms were tied with cords.

"The Lord hath delivered him into our hand!" cried one—"Smite him as Jael smote Sisera!" shouted another—"Let the spy be strangled!"—"Let the bloody oppressor be cast into the river!"—"Cleave the murderer to the shoulder!" were some of the cries uttered by the most zealous or passionate of the congregation.

"Brethren," cried Barker, from the pulpit—"beware what ye do!—bring not the man's blood on our souls."

"Nay, Master Parson, this man is a killer of God's saints, wherefore he is the foe of God!" one person shouted;—another said, "It shall be just to mete unto him his own measure: he hath come here to entrap us

into torture and death—so let it be done unto him;"—and others cried, "If we suffer him to depart, he will hunt us out, and deliver us into the fire!"

Mixed with these sounds of vengeance were the cries of the spy for mercy, which, though uttered with every demonstration of terror, were yet in a very loud voice, apparently to attract the notice of comrades without.

The congregation was not wholly composed of persons inclined to take away the man's life: perhaps there were not fifty that would have done it; but all that wished to inflict the act of illegal justice had rushed on him and seized him, and probably would have cut him in pieces before the cooler part of their brethren had had time to intercede. But Barker being still in the pulpit, could see what was passing, and he shouted—"Men—Christian men—hear me before ye commit murder! If ye wish to fight with

your foes, go into Smithfield to-morrow morning, and beard the bishop and sheriff: that would, at least, prove your manhood and courage. For shame, brethren!—ye go about to ruin the cause of Christ in England. Is your cause the cause of man or of God? If of man, I know nothing of it, and will depart from you; if of God, then you must use the weapons of God. Of all men, brethren, we should be most helpless, if we depended on ourselves, for the foe is a thousand times greater than we. We have nothing to do with blood and punishment; that must be poured forth by God only. The religion that I know, is to do our duty, to be resigned in persecution, and to pray for the persecutor that he may become a saint—not to kill him in his sins."

The men looked at each other inquiringly for an instant, a murmur of assent was heard through the room, and the prisoner

lay on the floor unharmed and untouched, though still bound.

"I thank ye, brethren," said Barker; "ye act as persecuted Christians should do. See that yonder knave doth not get free; for it becometh us to keep ourselves from danger, and also to keep even our enemies from sin. Now, sirs, I will go on with my sermon, and then we will pray for the conversion of this wicked man."

Master Barker then took up the broken thread of his discourse, but he had scarcely joined it, when a distant whistle was heard, and the man on the floor raising himself to a sitting position, exclaimed, "Now, my masters, ye shall see a trick as cunning as ye ever played! Yonder whistle is the challenge of my comrades, to the number of fifty, who have set a watch round this house. If ye suffer me not to go to them, they will presently demand me; and not one of you will pass before I go forth. Ye dare not

touch me, though I tell you that I came here to have assured ground for this enterprise."

"And if we suffer thee to go forth, what shall be done?" said the voice heard once before, at the other side of the room.

"I require to have the preacher and six other persons given up to me, to submit themselves to the bishop's pleasure."

"And what if we agree not to thy offer?"

"By the authority conferred on me by the Right Reverend Edmund Lord Bishop of London, I demand six leaders, or principal persons of this conspiracy or traitorous assembly, and if they be not delivered to me, we shall endeavour to seize them; and I warn everybody in this house, that whoever resisteth our lawful authority, doth levy war against the Queen's majesty, and shall be dealt with for felony, without benefit of clergy."

"And how do you propose to seize six men from these five hundred, when you have

only fifty?" the same person asked; and, coming forward at the same time, shewed the good-humoured face of Master Steynham.

"Ye shall understand," replied the spy, "that the men are posted about the doors of this house, so that ye are entirely at our mercy. Besides this, our cause is good: the men we cut down, or shoot, shall be as carrion; but if ye raise your hands against us, they shall be cut off, and if ye strike us, ye shall be hanged without benefit of clergy."

The whistle was heard now plainer than before, when Master Steynham sat down by the spy, saying—

"Friends, do not hurry yourselves: these men, it seems, are not to burst our doors without warning, and even after warning, they will require a few minutes' pommelling before they give way. We will leave this knave, with a fastening over his mouth to

curb his eloquent tongue, and I will call out the watch to scatter these people."

Having said this, Master Steynham tied a kerchief over the man's mouth, and fastened him in a closet in the room. Then turning to the congregation, he said—

"Friends, if we go forth now, we shall be challenged by the knaves on the outside, and as they are posted in warlike fashion, some of us must be taken as we go forth, and we might put our necks in halters by opposing the Queen's servants when they shew us lawful authority for their proceedings; but the bold citizens of London are empowered to keep the streets clear of night-walkers and watchers, and, as a member of the council, I will take upon me to drive even the Queen's yeomen of the guard from the city, if they come at unlawful hours. See, then, what is to be done. One of us must take boat and land at one of the stairs, and immediately summon the watch; and I

would ask if there be any here that will undertake this labour, which requireth some little caution and courage."

The persons were silent; not altogether from fear, but some through inability to manage a boat, some through ignorance of the road, and others from doubts of their power to bring the watch. Steynham then said——

"My brethren, I will cheerfully do this work, if ye will remain quietly here and guard the doors."

This was agreed to at once, when Steynham said——

"I will set you free in a few minutes; but I must first put Master Parson over the water, for he hath been kept here for our service, when he hath other duties to perform."

"Nay, Master Steynham," Barker replied, "I will not fly in that craven manner; I wear no sword, but I have an Eng-

lish heart. I will not leave the house till my Christian brethren be at liberty."

"That is the true spirit of a Christian gentleman," said Steynham; "bold in our persons but careful for our friends. Mind ye, then, that the bishop's knaves obtain not an entry before ye see me again."

"But, Master Steynham," cried several voices, "we will stay here and guard you, for you will be in danger from these men in the daylight. Soldiers will be sent against you."

"Nay, my masters," replied Steynham, with perfect unconcern, "I go to clear the streets, as in duty bound, from suspicious people lurking about, and I am to know nought of their intent. I shall also detain this spy for being in my house without leave, to give account of himself before my lord mayor to-morrow, who, perchance, will send him to gaol. Fear not for me, my friends—secure yourselves; and be as-

sured the Bishop of London will not be in haste to seize me."

Master Steynham then opened the window and dropped out; and when the persons looked forth after him, they beheld him let down a boat over the wall into the water, and springing into it, was immediately afterwards darting along the shore towards Paul's stairs.

Barker would have read a chapter in the Bible to the people; but the persons at the door were now so noisy in their summonses that it was useless to attempt it. Some of the boldest left the room to guard the outer door, which seemed every moment in danger of being beaten in by the axes of the besiegers: the younger part of those that remained took up the best position for defence and a free use of their weapons. Preaching, prayer, and meditation were entirely impracticable now: the fortunes and the lives of all present were in jeopardy,

nay, in immediate peril, which must be consummated or ended in few minutes; and the care of the present important moment absorbed all their thoughts and anxieties. But this anxiety did not last long: the efforts of the besiegers had not been pushed to such extremity as to force an acknowledgment from the persons besieged—the two parties had not come in contact, or had actual communication by word of mouth, when the persons in the house heard the challenge of the watch, and afterwards a short struggle, shortly after which the doors were thrown open and they all departed.

"Now, Master Barker," said Steynham, if you will deign to honour my poor house, after the trouble I have given you, we will walk in and take a horn of ale, or a flask of wine together."

"I must be excused," said Barker; "it is now past midnight by an hour, and I

must see my poor friends in the King's Bench Prison."

Master Steynham then looked at the sky from the window, and observing it to be exceedingly bright, said,—"I applaud your resolution, sir; I do not know whether I could endure the trials and tortures which old men, and even poor silly women, bear undauntedly, but I reverence the consciences that are stouter than mine own. I would not stay you from a work so good as the visiting and comforting poor men who are so shortly to endure the torture of fire; yet I must request you to wait till I advise you to depart."

Steynham then left the room for a few seconds, and returned, accompanied by a servant, bringing between them a couple of flasks of wine, a two-quart tankard of ale and a pasty. "You have worked hard this night, friend," said Steynham, "and must needs eat and drink. You shall lose no time, I promise you."

Barker seated himself, and partook of the good things set before him; but while he was eating, either from a Christian-like anxiety for a brother, or philanthropy generated by the refreshment, he said, — "I much marvel at what I have witnessed to-night, Master Steynham; and I am not free from anxiety as to the danger to your person from your boldness."

"Fear not for me," was the reply, "I fear nothing for myself."

"I should have thought, sir, the mightiest man in London would fear to put the bishop's men to the rout."

"Yea, Master Barker; as the bishop's men, I might have doubted, but I am not bound to know they were the bishop's men. The bishop shall find me very civil, now that my friends are gone."

"But this spy?"

"Oh," said Steynham, laughing, "this man must go before the mayor, to account

for being in my house at unlawful hours; and if his lordship demand him he will be given up. But, Master Barker, let me tell you, I am a merchant who tradeth largely with the Low Countries, and King Philip knoweth his interest too well to suffer me to be troubled, unless I had committed myself more openly than I have done now. My language, perhaps, savoureth too much of worldly wisdom to please you, as it is less bold than that of both men and women who give their testimony in prisons and in fire."

"Not so, sir," replied Barker; "I have been too timid myself to blame you. My conscience hath often reproved me for the caution I have practised to keep myself out of evil hands; and I have been ashamed to think of those courageous soldiers of Christ that have gone willingly into imprisonment, torture, and death."

"Be easy in thy conscience on that

head," replied Steynham. "It would assuredly be an evil thing to change thy faith with every change of the court, though many great ones do it; and it would be a deadly sin to live untouched through a lying declaration: but it can never be evil to beware of the foe ye cannot crush. Why, man, esteem you not these persecutors as evil doers? Think you not it is an evil deed to destroy or torture such a man as you? Will you, then, put yourself in their hands and encourage them in their evil? No. If I entrust a captain with my ship, I expect that he will do his boldest against the sea-robber if he can fight on fair terms; but if the foe be too strong, I expect that he will not go to him and ask him to take my ship, and make prisoners of the crew. I confess unto you, that though I maintain the religion of King Edward I seek not to die for it. I owe my faith to my father; and as I confess not an alacrity in

lying, I will endeavour not to place myself where I must lie or perish. I am a quiet man of trade; I will trouble no man for his faith, and I will keep myself from trouble if I can: but if by mischance I fall into the hands of the enemy, it remaineth to be seen what testimony I shall give of my conscience. But, my friend, we must be up and doing; the moon is overcast, and we may cross the river."

The candles were extinguished, and Steynham again got out at the window, and helped Barker out. They then lowered a boat after carefully looking up and down the river, and discerning no movement in the water, got in, and Steynham took the oars. He rowed close by the shore for about a hundred yards, when, being assured that the Thames' watch was not on their track, he struck out across the river, and in a few minutes landed at Paris-garden Stairs on the Surrey side.

"I thank you heartily for your courtesy," said Barker, "and I am glad that I met with you this night; for I rejoice to know that there are so many good men to be found."

"Good men, friend Barker! say, rather, zealous men. I support not the religion that putteth men to death."

"Truly, nor I. But, good sir, you must consider the injuries these men have received, and the danger they were in. It was the momentary weakness of oppressed men; and you marked how readily they took their hands from their persecutor when their violence was reproached."

"Yea, thanks to you, Master Barker; but I fear, if our minister had been as zealous as his flock, my hall would have been covered with blood, and I must have fled to Germany or Holland."

"Nay, I trust not, sir. I think that men and women who face indifferently such

dangers as are now threatening God's people, would not be guilty of so cowardly a sin. But, good sir, I must bid you farewell."

"Nay, Master Barker," replied Steynham, "I have brought you into danger this night, and I will not leave you before the danger is over. I will but fasten my boat to this tree, and then I will walk with you to the prison door."

Steynham led the way, sword in hand, like one that knew well the road; and turning down by the Bull-baiting Gardens, after traversing a few lanes and streets without interruption, said, "Farewell!" to Master Barker at the prison door.

CHAPTER IV.

THE old prison of the King's Bench was not very terrible in outward appearance, nor was it by any means so large as prisons built in states that are very highly civilized. It was not a huge pile of stones with bars of iron over its windows; nor a town inclosed within a lofty wall which had no window; nor was the gateway ornamented with a symbolical representation of its character, in a set of irons for hands and legs. The King's Bench had been erected early in the fourteenth century, when every country

house beyond a mere hovel had somewhat of a castellated character; and the marks of that general taste could still be discerned in this ancient building, although in the course of the last century it had been repaired and altered in the domestic style that rapidly spread over the country when gunpowder had shewn the penetrability of stone.

The King's Bench, then, bore no distinctive character, but would have been called a "fair white house," which, with its large garden, was fit for the residence of a gentleman. But though a stranger might have passed the house without noticing anything requiring or deserving a second glance, he would not have entered it without feeling that gentlemen did not, and that no human being ought to, live in it. It was not the rough and stained walls, the ragged floor and filth of the passages, or the lowness of the ceilings, that were peculiarly objection-

able; for these things were common in even the bettermost houses: it was not the want of proper ventilation only; for at a time when chimneys were uncommon, and people built up their windows to keep out the plague, the value of sweet air was not generally known: it was not the want of sewerage; for sweetness was not to be expected so near the city, when it was found necessary to pass laws against throwing dead dogs and cats, and the filth of private dwellings and of butchers' slaughter-houses in the streets: but all these combined their particular sweets in the atmosphere of the King's Bench, which, if it had been free from them, would still have been the most loathsome smell that can salute human nostrils—the confined air that has been inhaled over and over again by a large body of prisoners.

The King's Bench was now full: every place that had a fastening contained pri-

soners; every room, large enough for a man to lie down at full length, contained a dozen men; and other rooms of a moderate size contained thirty or more. The greater number of these rooms were made secure by being deprived of windows: light was supplied by candles and lamps; people being unconscious of the purifying effect of the light and warmth of the sun. It may be imagined, therefore, how this pent-up air, expanded by the heated bodies of so many men, and impregnated with all the foul scents just alluded to, rushed out in Barker's face, when the keeper opened the door. That flood of pestilential vapour beat him from the door as though it had been the flames of sulphur, or the putrid breath of the plague. He had been much used to the sick-room; as in those times of close and dirty habitations, sickness was very common, and the ministers of the reformed church were very zealous in this part of their duty,

because their predecessors had neglected it. No disorder, however loathsome, no fever or pestilence, would have kept him from ministering to a Christian. But this was worse than any sick-room of cottage or hospital; and it struck him the more forcibly from his recent walk through Southwark Fields, and the row across the clear and sweet river.

It was not a time, however, to be very nice or delicate. Barker was obliged to decide whether he would enter this den of pollution or go home; for though it was a night in June, clear, and warm, and perfumed, generally through England, with flowers, the man that opened the door stood shivering at the cold air, which Barker thought so exquisitely warm and soothing. Perhaps neither the gaolers nor their prisoners were aware of the horrible atmosphere which they breathed, and which was poisoning them—perhaps they might never think of it till it

produced a gaol fever, which would destroy every man, woman, and child, in a few hours. Custom makes a man insensible of a poisonous atmosphere, if it does not make his body able to bear it. The man who opened the door was horridly pallid and thin. No man with such a countenance could have long to live. The candle in his hand was bent nearly double, through the intense and penetrating heat, and its flame puffed outwards, and flashed and spluttered as the door was opened, and dwindled again into a little, faint, dim, yellow ball, that gave little light, as the man drew back into the passage from what he felt as cold. The very walls were affected; for instead of absorbing a part of the oppressive air, and condensing a part, they were as dry as the skin of the inhabitants: the walls had become warm, and repelled the air, although it was so saturated with the steam of human bodies that a sword-blade or a goblet brought fresh into

the house, would have been instantly as wet as though they had been in a brook. It required the summoning of all his resolution to enable Master Barker to enter the prison; and when he ventured, it was as a man accustomed to the sweet breezes of our meadows venturing on the battle-field a week after the death of ten thousand, or into the fellmonger's shop, wherein is animal matter in every stage of decay.

He drew a long breath of the fresh air, wrapped his cloak over his mouth, and hurried along the passage. But the farther he went, the worse he fared; and he was soon compelled to let down his cloak, and breathe the air around him, though it bore disease to every man that took it. Barker was somewhat amazed at the scene he now witnessed. As he went along the passage, he passed half-a-dozen doors, all of which were strongly fastened with bolts, locks, and bars; but as they came to the foot of the

stairs, there was a kind of chamber, or open space, on each hand, which had no doors, and here some portion of the management of the house was discernible. As the gaoler gave the candle into Barker's hand while he undid the fastenings, the visitor turned it into the two rooms; and though its feeble light scarcely penetrated to the end, he discovered sufficient to arouse his curiosity.

This gaoler's heart was not savage—it melted at the sight of silver: the present of a groat from Master Barker was sufficient to induce him to walk through the rooms with his candle, and exhibit what they contained. Barker wished to see, but did not desire to enter; and he saw enough to satisfy himself—enough to keep any man virtuous all the days of his life, if virtue could preserve a man from a prison.

The plastered walls, and ceiling stained with the filth of twenty years, barely allowed a man to stand upright, and the

stifling atmosphere thus produced was not sweetened, nor the dead walls cheered by light from windows or doors. The floor was covered with straw by no means of a straw colour, and bearing very little of the odour of a corn-field, and on this lay and sat about twenty human beings, as close as they could be packed. Two of these were in the last stage of a fever, several appeared to be recovering from it, one was dead, and all looked wan and feeble, and ready to die. These men were fastened to the wall with heavy chains attached to their arms and legs, which kept the body constantly double —these were murderers on the highway, and wizards. Four were chained by an iron belt on each wrist, which kept the arms useless—these were housebreakers, and wretches who had traitorously pronounced Edward legitimate, and were undergoing a term of imprisonment. Some were merely handcuffed—these were cheaters, heretics,

suspected schismatics, and persons who had offended the Chief Justice or some great man. These seemed to be asleep, although they tossed about like people disturbed with disordered imaginations. Two persons only were awake. One was a young woman with a child in her arms not a week old, —the other, a half-naked idiot with a very long, ragged beard, who amused himself by snatching at the child and frightening the mother: this woman was confined for relieving her husband, who lay under suspicion of protestantism; the idiot had been committed by Cranmer for popery in the days of Henry, and had sunk from an acute reasoner into his present state of idiocy solely through want of occupation and amusement in the many years of his imprisonment, in which he had been forgotten.

When the gaoler had walked through this room, he returned into the passage, and would have exhibited the other

chamber, but Master Barker desired that it might not be shewed, and requested to be conducted to his friend. The gaoler unfastened the door and led the way up stairs, where the evidences of people were quite as strong as below. Nay, the filthy smell was even more nauseous: the slight draught through the front door contributed in a small degree to purge the air; but in the upper rooms there was no draught, and not only did the fumes of the lower apartments ascend, but the hot sun darting on the red tiles overhead, by adding to the heat, added to the impurity of the atmosphere.

It may appear strange that so many prisoners could be held in an old house like this, which was by no means remarkably strong; but the want of proper ideas of separation and security made the keepers very watchful, so that both day and night there was some one awake and ready to examine into the cause of every noise.

Besides this, the chain was very much used, and used in such a manner as to cripple men for life; so that very few, after enduring two or three days' imprisonment, had the courage or spirit requisite for an attack on the keepers, or a plan of escape. The most common method of escape was, a bursting of the wall: this had sometimes cleared two or three rooms; but was seldom successful, as the watch was constantly on the look out. The great majority of the prisoners were awed by the terrors of the law; for it was certain that a keeper might murder a thousand men, and no one notice it, even if he should hear of it, which was by no means certain.

Barker did not wonder that the prisoners made no violent attempts to get into the open air: his own spirits sank; he seemed fainter himself through the sudden intense perspiration; his own feelings, as well as a sight of the ghastly wretches below, assured

him that a very few hours in this prison were sufficient to cripple the energies of every man.

As the gaoler opened the door where Barker's friend was confined, he appeared to shew a crowd of prisoners; for the room, though very small, was very full. There was scarcely space for one man to lie at his full length, and there were eight persons in it. But they were not all prisoners. Doctor Maynard, Barker's friend, with four companions, were all the prisoners; the other persons were a sheriff's-man and two Spanish friars. These latter were from the Bishop of Winchester, who lived by the water-side near the bridge; the other was a servant of the sheriff of London, for the prisoners belonged to the diocese of London, and had been sent here because the city prisons were full.

If a person could have forgotten the circumstances of the individuals, there would

have appeared something very picturesque in the view of that little room. The only light was from a small oil-lamp hanging from the ceiling, which picked out the angles of the great stones of the walls, and gave a forcible but peculiar clearness to the different passions on the countenances of the men. The prisoners were clad plainly, and the great heat had forced them to throw off their doublets; their faces were pale, but calm and quiet, with the exception of Dr. Maynard, an old, feeble, grey-headed man, whose countenance was full of animation. The friars, bronzed by a Spanish sun, were not affected by the heat of the prison; their faces, full of animated anger, were as brown as ever; their strongly marked features were exceedingly impressive, if not startling, seen as they were in the strong light and shade produced by the solitary lamp; and the cowls thrown back giving a full view of their naked necks, shaven faces and crowns, con-

trasted forcibly with the others. The sheriff's-man was labouring in his vocation; he was calm as a stone—his face had neither pity nor triumph.

The friars had been chopping logic in the Latin tongue with Dr. Maynard throughout the night, to the great interest of the three persons engaged, but to the great annoyance of the others, since four of the prisoners were labouring men, who knew nothing of Latin, and the gaoler was acquainted with only the results of the logic of his age, which was, imprisonment and death.

The friars had just pronounced the eternal damnation of Dr. Maynard, as Barker entered, and of course had completed their mission. They now departed and left the friends together; when Dr. Maynard observing who the visitor was, advanced towards him, and pressing his hand, kissed him on the right cheek, and desired him to be seated. A narrow deal table and a couple of forms or

benches under the walls were all the furniture of the cell, and on one of these latter, the two friends seated themselves side by side.

"You are faithful to your friend," said Dr. Maynard; "and I thank God heartily for you. But this is the very time for friends to be true; for they have rivals in the great God, who is now consummating his loving-kindness towards his friends."

"I rejoice that you look so comfortably on your bonds."

"Comfortably, man! why, what is more comfortable—what better, than to be chosen by God to bear witness to his truth? If I were as young as you, I could desire nothing better than to be taken from the vanities of this world to enter the heavenly kingdom; but as an old worn-out man, what more honourable close to a life of labour than a crown of martyrdom?"

"It is a glorious thing to die for the truth, surely, but——"

"Nay, my friend, there is no *but* in the case; it is altogether, and in all respects good. Yea, so highly do I esteem this honour, that loving thee better than any other man, I crave nothing better for thee than that as God hath called thee in early years to his truth, so he may honour thy faithfulness by making thee one of his martyred witnesses."

"Dear Dr. Maynard," replied Barker; "I fear I have not the courage to venture into the way of death if I may avoid it; I trust, however, not to shame my profession if I fall into evil hands. I am sorry, dear sir, that you have not had this night to yourself; it is very cruel to pursue you even until now with these friars and doctors."

"Nay, my good friend, not so. Trust me, I know not when I have passed a pleasanter night. The two friars whom thou sawest, although they speak no English, are very

learned men, and our disputations were very pleasant. I am old now, and not so well seen in the school-men and fathers as forty years agone, and I prayed oftentimes that you might come to help me; yet I did my best, and never trust me if I did not ruffle the fine logical feathers of these Spanish birds. But, believe me, I had to keep all my wits about me; for the friars brought all the fathers since Christ to bear on me. I am sorry only that my poor friends here could not be edified, as they know no Latin."

"Please you, Master Doctor," said one of the men; "we could hearken very well to you; for though we understood not the popish tongue, which sounded like the mass, we were glad to see the friars lose their temper, because we were sure they were getting the worst of it."

"Well, perchance ye lost not much that was good, friends," said the doctor, with a

smile. "These men trusted more to the words of the doctors than to the words of God; and though a divine must know what his predecessors have written, perhaps the people are happier that can remain content with the simple Word. But, friend Barker, I expected you some hours agone."

"Yes, dear sir, I would have been with you as I promised, but that I found a flock by the way that had lost its shepherd, and I ministered to them."

"You did well, friend; and truly, for the good cause, I could have been content to leave the world without seeing the face of my dear friend; and that would be worse than the burning: but now that my time draweth to an end, I must acquaint you shortly with what I would have you do."

"I pray you, dear friend and father," said Barker, earnestly, "tell me everything that is on your mind wherein I can serve you: next to the command of God, yours shall

stand in my heart. Nay, they shall go side by side, for well I know they shall agree."

"I want you not to see to the disposal of my riches," said Dr. Maynard; "for even if the priests should not seize it, there would be little to tempt any one. I lost my riches where I lost my learning; for my parish was large, and had more need of my purse than of my schooling. But in my poor village, I have a riches beyond price, for which I shall shortly account to Him who bestowed it on me—I mean, my flock. They are a poor, silly people, unlearned and rude, yet have I been with them so long, and I do know them so well, from the aged grandsire down to the little child on the mother's knee, and they know me so well, that I sorely fear they will miss me. I was taken unawares by night, and could not give them a word of advice and consolation; and sure I am, the silly poor folk will shed many a tear, if they hear not from me again. Go

then, Barker, to my village, on a Sunday morning, and when the folk come out from church, say that you have a message from me; and be sure many a man, and woman, and child, shall ask about old Dr. Maynard. Do you then declare, that I died in the true Protestant faith, as established by king Edward, and say, that I look to meet so many of them in heaven, as turn not back from the faith I taught and died for. Tell them, that I send them a loving farewell, and that they did not leave my heart so long as it could feel anything on this earth."

"I will certainly deliver your message, dear friend," said Barker.

"And whilst thou art there, seek out my poor dame. If they have turned her from the parsonage, I warrant she hath not gone far: she is as old as I, and old people go not far from home to find friends. My poor old woman! would I might see thee once more, before I close mine eyes on this world, for we

have been together very long! Thou knowest too, Barker, that I have two sons; one of them is in Germany, and the other I know not where; and before they can hear of my fortune, I shall be dead. They are two good boys, and dutiful, and I must die without looking on their faces. That is the bitterest part—nay, the only bitter part, of my estate. I would see my dear children once more; yea, I would, I would."

As the old man was saying this, tears ran down his cheeks, and over his beard; and at the end he stopped with an hysterical gasp, and crossed his hands over his heart, as though it were bursting. While Barker hesitated as to the way in which he could offer consolation, one of the prisoners, a young man in the garb of a husbandman, stepped towards the old man, and taking his hand, said—"I pray you, Master Doctor, take good heart in this extremity. Unto this you declared months back that

true Christians must come; and as we have followed you and your gospel, even to the prison, and are ready to follow you to the fire, I pray you take courage, and meet your fortune boldly, that our hearts may not waver."

"Good fellow!" said Maynard, "thou speakest well; and trust me, I am bold as any English Christian, and I will not go back. But God who hath made us, and guideth us, knoweth that it is just and reasonable to love our wives and children, and to lament when we are to behold them no more. The true Christian must needs be a loving husband and father; and I may well shed a few human tears over the old dame, turned from her house with but a scanty pittance, and the two good boys, that may not know their father's fate until it is too late to receive his blessing."

The old man again crossed his hands over his heart, and suffered his tears to roll over

his cheeks. Then another man arose, and said, "I trow, Master Maynard, that you do not over well to grieve for the loss of wife and children, when we should be strengthening ourselves for the last trial. It seemeth to me that we make our account to bear these crosses when we take on ourselves to follow Christ."

"Nay, but friend," said Barker, "Dr. Maynard doth but give a few moments to his dear kindred, and he shall shortly, I doubt not, comfort you, and strengthen you for your sacrifice."

"Perchance it shall be so," replied the man; "but we be poor unlearned men, and you be learned, and if even ye shew the weakness of the flesh that peradventure we sometimes feel, our hearts may fail at the last. But Master Maynard, if you have cause to mourn, surely some of us have also. You say, that the good old dame is turned from her house with a small pittance, and

your sons are abroad in the world: Mistress Maynard, then, hath not long to want, even if her sons do not shortly return and help her, and your flock help her not. But I leave a wife with four young children, one born since I was seized: alack, Master Maynard, my poor Mary hath no pittance for her children or herself, and she hath not a flock to give her a bit of bread. If any man, then, should cry and bewail himself, it is me; for though I have resolved to leave wife and children to the mercy and care of the Lord, there is not a man of learning in the realm that loveth his poor family with a dearer love than mine."

"Thou sayest well," cried Maynard, rising from his seat, and stretching his thin arms towards Heaven; "I thank my God, that thou hast so learned from me, that thou canst well reprove my backsliding, or strengthen me in the weakness of the flesh. But it is past, and from this moment I have

done with earth. Hear then, my friend, my last charge: go to Aldham, my poor parish, and when thou findest my wife, say, that I charge her to obey the laws of God, and the worship of God, as I have taught; and that I died in the assured hope she would obey me, whereby we should meet in another world. Tell her, too, that I charge her to command our two boys to read daily the Word of God, and that therefore I give them my blessing. Say, too, that one of my children in the faith, John Williams, whom thou beholdest here, leaveth a wife and children, without help or stay; and say, that I desire her to share what she hath with them, and by no means to suffer either the woman or her little ones to want a morsel of bread while she hath one to give them. Bid her do this, as she prizeth my love. And now I have done with wife and children, and the world, and will address myself to the task I have to perform."

At this moment, the prison-door was opened, and the gaoler appeared, bearing a small packet, which he said was for Dr. Maynard. The old man opened it, when a purse of money fell to the ground, and the other part of the packet as he spread it forth, all the persons present knew to be a shroud.

"Who hath brought this?" asked the old man, eagerly.

"A woman gave it to me at the door," was the reply.

"An old woman, I believe," said Maynard.

"It was an old woman," said the gaoler.

"Lo ye, my friends! old Joan Maynard is of the right stock," cried the doctor; "see what a fitting gift she hath made me. Oh, master gaoler, I pray thee, let me speak with her one minute."

"Nay, thou dost not depart hence, till the sheriff cometh for thee; and surely I will let no woman come at thee. What!

thinkest thou we bring wenches to our prisoners? Fie! fie!"

"But this is my wife, and no wench," replied Maynard.

"Thy wife, man!" cried the gaoler; "why, thou being a priest canst have no wife."

"But," replied Maynard, "the good Bishop of London hath degraded me, and cast me from the priesthood; wherefore it is lawful, even by your laws, for me to have a wife now."

The gaoler paused awhile over this weighty argument; but at length discerning the sophistry of the old man's pleasant reply, he said, with a grin of conscious ability—

"Yea, thou canst have a wife now, if thou canst find a woman and a priest in the humour. But your former marriage was unlawful and null; and when thou wast degraded, the woman thou speakest of

did not therefore become thy lawful wife; and I am sure no woman shall get at thee here."

"Well, go thy ways, Joan, the best wife that ever blessed a man," cried the doctor; "be sure I will wear thy garment with as much joy as the robes of my bridal-day; for behold, this is another and a better bridal! But, friends, this purse is not sent for nought. Is it not the custom when friends part to have a carousal together? and behold, we are about to part for ever on the earth, and we will have our carousal; and thou, master goaler, to shew thee that I bear thee no ill-will for thy straight dealing, shalt sit down with us and drink, and bring thy wife with thee."

"Nay, God forbid that we should consort with such as thou."

"Why, my good man, we are no malefactors, or men of violence, that thou needest fear, and I have heard thee talking merrily

with housebreakers, and robbers on the high road."

"Yea, master, I take it there is little harm in passing a merry hour with the man that is to be hanged or beheaded, when he confesseth himself and is absolved; but I will not consort with a heretic wretch like you here, that are excommunicated, and shall be burned without a priest by you."

"Well, well, man, we will not dispute with thee; if thou likest not our company, thou shalt have liberty to choose other. But, I pray thee, canst thou help us to a quart or two of wine?"

At this demand the countenance of the gaoler relaxed: he had observed the purse, and probably lamented that he had not examined the packet rather more narrowly; though it is to be remembered, that as Doctor Maynard had been visited by so many priests, and had one with him now,

it might have been dangerous to touch anything belonging to the prisoner, since the slightest complaints from them would have been sufficient to take him to the gallows. There seemed a safer way of getting the money now—a way not strange to the gaolers of the time, and the man replied more civilly—

"Why, master, you know the taverns of Southwark are not open, and if we call them up to get wine for you, we shall fall into the hands of the watch."

"Yea," replied Dr. Maynard, "but perchance thou canst procure wine without going forth of the house."

"Why, there is a little," said the man; "but it is wine of the very bettermost kind: quite a different wine from that sold at taverns: it is a wine brought from——"

"Nay, friend, there be judges of wine here, and we will give you our opinion of it after we have drunken of it. Bring us a quart."

"Why, truly, master, I would do anything to pleasure you. But as for this wine, I care not to part with it, for it cost me a great sum."

"Oh, man, I see you would strike a bargain. Well, what shall I pay thee the quart?"

"Why, worthy sir, I might take my wine to court and sell it at great profit; for I swear that the Queen's majesty drinketh not such wine: but you are so civil, that I will not refuse you at one gallon for an angel."

"Ten shillings a quart, man!" cried Dr. Maynard; "I think thou lookest not to have great traffic in wine; and I tell thee, if I were about to replenish my cellar, I would hardly deal with thee, for if I remember right, the best wine selleth for four shillings the gallon."

"Well, master," replied the gaoler, "I force you not to have it, for I can always

sell my wine. But you cannot send to a tavern."

"I know it," said Maynard; "thou hast the advantage in this bargain; for thou knowest that when taverns open, I shall have other business on hand than drinking or carousing. Bring us, then, a quart of thy wine, and a loaf of bread, and I will pay thee thy charges."

In the course of a few seconds, the gaoler returned with the wine and a loaf, which, with an earthenware cup, he set on the table; and although he had professed such a violent hatred against heresy before, he sat down on one of the benches as though not disinclined to join the carousal in which wine was an element. But Dr. Maynard, regarding the provisions very earnestly, turned to the man and said—

"Leave us to ourselves the next half-hour, good man; and if thou wilt return then, bring thy wife, and ye shall drink

with us with a hearty welcome, and, perchance, I may purchase more wine of thee."

The gaoler went out, when the old man, approaching the table, poured out a cupful of the wine, and said—

"Dear children, it draweth nigh to the hour of our parting; and as this is to be the last time we may meet on earth, let us put the seal of heaven on our dear friendship. We have here the sacred elements, and what forbiddeth us to make this truly a holy supper. We that are in bonds, being excommunicate, may neither administer nor receive the sacrament by the laws now made; but though we be cast out by the present bishops, there is a Judge greater than they of our consciences; and as our consciences have brought us here, the sacrament, devoutly received, shall be comfortable to our hearts, and strengthening to our souls. Master Barker and the sheriff's man

will stand by: one of them obeyeth his commander, and will not join us; and Master Barker, being yet unsuspected, shall not lay himself under suspicion so long as it may be avoided."

"I will receive the sacrament at your hands, my dear father!" cried Barker. "No craven fear shall make me shrink from this holy communion."

"Come, then, children," said the old man, "examine yourselves whether you heartily repent yourselves of your sins, whether you are in charity with all men, whether you forgive your persecutors and murderers, whether you can trust your bodies, your wives, your children, yea, all that ye have, in the hands of God. Think well on it, and I will wait awhile for your answer."

After a few minutes' pause, Dr. Maynard said—

"Well, children, can you partake of the bread and wine?"

"Yea, we can," they all replied.

Then Dr. Maynard broke the loaf in pieces, and gave a part to each; then he sent round the cup in like manner, and when it was empty, he took it in his hands, saying, "This cup hath not been set apart for this ceremony, though I trust no utensil can mar the effect of the sacrament, if it be rightly taken: nevertheless, the cup that hath been thus used shall never be employed in an unworthy office." Thus saying, he cast the cup on the floor, and said, "Let us pray."

The old man prayed long and earnestly, not only for those that were present, but for the whole church, and even for those who had sent him there; and when he had made an end, he arose, and said, with the natural cheerfulness of his nature, "It seemeth to me, friends, that we have now squared accounts with the world, and with our own souls. We are now prepared for

the sacrifice; and if any of us die unworthily, the sacrament shall condemn him. But I trust all is well with us. What say you, then? The Lord loveth cheerful hearts, and an innocent recreation is pleasant in his sight; wherefore we will have up the gaoler and his wife, and we will all take a cheerful cup of wine together, before I give mine alms to the poor prisoners around us, and clothe myself for Smithfield."

Dr. Maynard rapped on the door, and shortly afterwards the bolts were withdrawn, and the gaoler and his wife came in. The man had lost somewhat of the horror he had formerly professed towards heretics; and though his countenance still wore the cold and brutish expression generated by familiarity with misery and crime, he assumed a kind of smirking civility, perhaps to help the sale of his wine. But the woman had evidently a pretty decided fear and hatred of the company of men about to

be executed; and probably she estimated their guilt by their punishment, for she sat as close as possible to her husband, to secure his protection. Another cup being brought, Dr. Maynard filled it with wine, and gave it to the gaoler, saying, "This is the last time we shall ever meet on earth; and if we have troubled each other, it is now the time for a general pardon, since we can never more give offence. I, for mine own part, heartily forgive all that have injured me, as I crave forgiveness of those whom I have offended. Let us then drink a farewell cup together, as the children of one Father that is in heaven."

"Well, master, I wish you no harm, truly," said the gaoler—"and I will drink with you; for you seem an honest fellow."

"You, too, will drink with us, mistress," said Dr. Maynard to the woman; "for, though I am a prisoner, I have never willingly harmed any person; besides,

women's hearts are mild and kind, and I am old, and leave a dear wife and children, whom I love as well as thou canst love thine."

The woman's countenance relaxed as she heard these words of unexpected mildness, and she drank, saying, "Well, master, I will drink with you; and as you leave children, I am sorry for you."

"And now, Master Sheriff's man," said Maynard, "you must drink, too; for though we have given you the trouble to sit up with us through this night, you will readily believe that it was against our will. And for your keeping so narrow watch over us, we know that you obey your master's orders, and we bear no malice. So, I pray you, drink in charity."

The sheriff's man, snugly ensconced in a corner, with much ado had kept himself awake—he had paid little or no attention to what was passing, except that he opened

his eyes occasionally, to be sure that his prisoners were all there; and now he gave no reply to Dr. Maynard's civil invitation, saving that he took the cup in his hand, put it to his mouth, and in a quarter of a minute returned it empty. Long draughts were more after his heart than long speeches.

The doctor then called for a fresh quart, and passed it round to his friends, and took a sip himself: the rest he divided among the other persons.

"It seemeth," said he, "that this is the most joyous company I ever joined; for behold there is no enmity between us, neither do we bear malice against any man, but are in perfect charity with all men. But, lo ye! it is now a time for my rejoicing, for is not this my wedding-day? This is the true wedding garment!" he cried, extending the shroud before the people.

"Holy Mother!" exclaimed the gaoler's wife—"it is dead clothes."

" Yea, it is a shroud, dame, and is the dress for a wedding better than all the marriages on this earth; for in this there shall be no change, no strife, no suspicion, no decay. The precious union shall endure for ever and ever, and the last hour shall be as bright as the first."

" Good man," said the gaoler's wife, in a compassionate tone, " why be so wilful to leave your poor wife and children? I will send for a priest, if ye will talk with him, and so ye may see your error, and get a pardon."

" Ah, my good woman," replied the Doctor, with a smile, " I have talked with priests until they sent me here; and little would it avail me to talk any further with them."

" Well, I must needs say, you are a bold old man," said the gaoler. " I never beheld one like you in this prison. But the tankard is empty, master; and perchance you would like the other quart."

"Nay, my son," replied the Doctor, "it is well to be merry at a wedding, so that we pass not the bounds of discretion; and behold our carousal shall be rather of the spirit than of the flesh—more for the minds we bring than in the quantity of wine we drink; wherefore, as my time draweth short, we will drink no more. But to shew you that I know the duties of a liberal housekeeper too well to stint my guests, behold, Master Gaoler, here is a shilling to buy you a cup of wine when I am gone—you know the taverners will not charge you an angel the gallon. Here is a shilling for you, too, mistress, and another for you, Master Sheriff's man; and now I would go round the prison, and give mine alms."

The gaoler then arose, and opened the door to accompany the Doctor, when the woman, melted in spite of herself by the Doctor's simplicity and kindness, slipped the shilling back into his hand, saying—

"I will not have thy money, poor man: give it one of thy poor friends! Truly I am sorry for you."

"Nay, keep the money, my friend," replied the Doctor, "and give it to thy children, and be not sorry for me, that I end my days for the truth; but if thou feelest compassion, be good and kind to the next poor creature that is brought here for conscience' sake."

The woman put her apron to her eyes, and went away. Barker arose to accompany his friend round the prison, when the old man said—

"Now, dear friend, thou must go thy ways. The sheriff will come shortly, and if thou be found here, thou shalt be suspected."

"I will not depart from you, my dear friend and father!" cried Barker, throwing his arms round the old man's neck; "my heart is bursting with wrath as well as grief,

to think that this world can cast forth a man so simple, so humble, so good as you. Let the sheriff come—I will tell him and the justice what I think, and they shall, if they choose, send me after you to Smithfield."

"My dear friend," cried Maynard, "this passion is not well; and it shall melt away the resolution which should prove to the world the boldness of God's soldiers. I grieve to part from you, for you are my most innermost friend, but there cometh a time—do my requests, good friend, and fear not but we shall meet again where truth shall have no enemies. Go, I charge you: save yourself, and suffer me to die boldly. Farewell, Barker; and may God Almighty's blessing prevent and follow all your doings!"

Barker bent a moment on his knees, to receive the old man's blessing; then he arose, and rushed away, crying—"Nay, if I die

for it, with thee, I will meet thee again in Smithfield!"

The door was closed on the minister, and Dr. Maynard went over the prison to make an empty purse with the poor prisoners.

CHAPTER V.

When Master Barker entered the open air after this conference, he started like a man suddenly facing the mid-day sun after a long imprisonment in a mine—day had come on to the world without being able to send a ray of light to the inhabitants of that cell. It was nearly five, and, on a morning of June, that hour was one of peculiar brightness and beauty. The sky was unobscured by a cloud, and although the chimneys of the distant city might be seen smoking, yet those white columns rather added to the

beauty than defaced it, since they arose not into an atmosphere already filled with dusky particles, but into a heaven as clear as that which hangs over the village of a hundred souls. The sun was piercing, though cold, and shone with splendour unbearable to him who had spent the hours of night in the filth and gloom of a dungeon: it seemed that the world had grown suddenly brighter and more beautiful than ever; the flakes of yellow that ran along the hedges, and spread through the whole east, seemed of a more golden richness than he had ever seen before; the very leaves of the trees that lined the roads through St. George's Fields, towards Woolwich and Kingston, were of a more brilliant green than usual; no sound was to be heard save the singing of the lark, the nightingale, and the thrush—the minister could have fancied he had got into a new world. Alas! if voluntary imprisonment for a few hours altered the mind so much as

to make it receive such different impressions of the free, open world, what would be done by imprisonment for months and years, with a certainty of a cruel death at the end of it!

On such a morning, after such a night, Master Barker would have greatly preferred the face of God as it is seen in the country to the face of man as it is seen in cities: he would have loved to ramble through the fields down to Westminster Stairs, cross the water there, and find his way to Islington without entering the city boundaries. Such a pure blue sky, such green fields, such peace above and below, it seemed a folly to leave for the turmoil of a city! But his heart was full of feelings that were incompatible with a thorough enjoyment of physical beauty; his mind was occupied with speculations of a higher nature than comparisons between town and country—he was determined to be present at the martyrdom

of his Christian friends, and he fancied that in deciding to be there, he was deciding on becoming also a martyr. He knew that Bishop Bonner, or at least some of his agents or instruments, would be there, who, like wolves having tasted blood, would by any means drink of it again. He knew that in the agony of the hour of burning he could not abstain from comforting his friends, as they would not abstain from addressing him, while any public communication between them would certainly cause suspicion to fall heavy on him in a very few hours, or minutes. It was a very interesting train of thought which was to determine a man to give himself to the horrors of a slow consuming fire, amid the curses of a populace.

If a doubt crossed the heart of our minister, or a shudder passed through it, it did not stay him for an instant. As soon as he left the gate of the prison, he turned by St. George's Church towards the bridge.

How very beautiful the old city shone out over the few straggling houses of Southwark! That long mass of gable ends in a thousand gradations of light and shade from the low brilliant sun, the scores of steeples and turrets, the chalky-looking Tower, and the magnificent spire of St. Paul's Cathedral, were all mellowed into the effect of a picture by the distance; and the clear river with a hundred vessels, some at rest and some in motion, formed altogether such a picture of beauty and vastness that the minister was constrained to mutter—"And must all this be marred with human torture! —is there not room in this world for the harmless men I have just left!"

As he said this, he caught a glimpse of the entrance of London Bridge, and Traitor's Tower at the other end, which stood out black and hideous against the sky, with more than a dozen rotting heads of men beheaded in the past year sticking on so many poles.

"Right or wrong," muttered Barker, "ye fought for worldly objects—with you it was honours or death—ye failed, and ye are there. But these poor men—what harm have they done? God grant a speedy overthrow to this tyranny."

As he said this, he reached the entrance of the bridge, the gate of which was thrown open as St. Mary Overie's clock struck five, and the minister entered the city.

Strange it appeared to him that the shopkeepers on the bridge, and those in the city, were taking down their shutters and displaying their wares with the same air of caution and industry as usual—he thought the nation altogether would be alarmed at the horrible execution: it seemed improbable that ten men could be found in the world who could rejoice or be indifferent on the morning when men were to be burnt to ashes for worshipping their God as their consciences commanded them. But no; the world was going on as heretofore. The

apprentices were displaying the wares about the doors and in the windows, or settling themselves to their handiwork; the masters stood at their doors, wishing each other a good morning as they glanced at the day, and the people in the streets had the air of going about their ordinary occupations: no gatherings together of the people in indignation; no whisperings between neighbours; no brave apprentices raising the gathering cry to do an act of irregular justice; no women wringing their hands or turning their white faces towards the wall in grief; no general flocking of the people towards the place of murder! Master Barker's heart was very sad; for it seemed that the whole nation was an oppressor, and gloried in the destruction of the saints.

All that he saw in his walk oppressed him. As he passed Paul's Cross, he thought of the apostate Smith, who had preached there the Sunday before, where holy Latimer

had often preached; as he passed through Paul's Church, he thought of the empty and blasphemous mass daily celebrated instead of the godly worship of good Ridley and his clergy; as he went down Newgate Market, he saw before him the prison of the Gate where so many Christians had been confined and tortured; and when he passed through into Giltspur Street, he beheld on the left the house of the Lord Chief Justice, who had unrighteously condemned so many saints, in defiance of the jury; and on his right was Smithfield, where several of them had already been destroyed. But these signs of unchristian government and political tyranny struck his heart with less force than things of a humbler nature, which seemed to prove a general backsliding—he had been constrained to remark, that of the many hundred signs hanging over his head, which had formerly been in honour of the Bible, the King, Cranmer, Luther, etc., not

one was to be seen which bore not an allusion to the Romish faith,—and this was more ominous than all. Yes, that walk through the city, abounding with rich and powerful bigots to the old religion, was calculated to make the minister's heart shrink with terror.

But all the horrors indirectly suggested by association with familiar objects faded away into nothing compared to that which arose in his mind as he passed through Giltspur Street, and beheld Smithfield. It required neither imagination nor memory to comprehend the palpable hideousness of the scene; it required only to understand the scene itself. In the centre of the square, a dozen men had formed an enclosure of some thirty yards diameter—at one extremity of which they had erected a pulpit, and three tiers of seats, as it seemed, for persons of different ranks; towards the other end, they were fixing five upright square pieces of timber,

with an iron chain attached, and at the foot of each piece of wood, as soon as it was fixed they laid a small bundle of straw. These were five stakes, to each of which a human being was to be fastened and consumed by fire, by means of faggots which were piled close by.

There were already many persons in Smithfield; for even now there was a kind of show for idle people, as a company of soldiers and a considerable number of the city servants were keeping watch over the men who were constructing the stage for the exhibition of Christian heroism. But besides this, there were several large booths erected within a short distance of the ring, which were to be let out at somewhat like playhouse prices to sight-seers, and many other stalls of smaller dimensions for the sale of fruit, confectionary, etc., were in course of erection. Smithfield was like a country town early on a fair-morning.

Barker walked up to the place of execution—perhaps he wished to speak to some one, or to observe whether any faithful brethren of those about to be destroyed were present. At such a moment it would have been very sweet to hear a word of comfort, or pity, or courage, from another; as it would have assisted him in the struggle going on in his heart between apostasy or time-serving, and truth, with its reward, which was being brought before him in its most horrible form. But there was no one to speak to him; there was no one to sympathize with him; not a face in the mass of persons around was expressive of present sorrow. The official persons were satisfied in the consciousness of their office, and their momentary authority over the mob; and the mob were eagerly expecting a somewhat exciting scene. This mob was composed chiefly of beggars, pickpockets, and harlots, persons who had nothing to do and nowhere

to go, and those who came there in expectation of violence and plunder.

The minister turned away with a deep sigh, after glancing at the faces that were thronging about the working men. The ribald talk and oaths of that wretched cluster of human beings suited not him: the man who has looked on the coffin of a beloved brother or child is not more solemn than he was after gazing on those horrible posts and chains.

It yet wanted nearly two hours of the time for the prisoners' arrival; and Barker, sick at the sight of those implements of torture, might have gone home, if he had not promised to meet his friend again. But to wait there, in sight of those terrible preparations, was too much. He went into St. Bartholomew's Church, and, there being no service at the time, knelt down and prayed fervently for direction and for courage; and when he came forth again to the open

world, it was with a bounding heart, a fevered and flushed cheek, and a determined spirit. He went forward to meet the procession—to comfort the prisoners, to encourage them, and, if necessary, to join them.

Master Barker went back to the bridge, and taking up his place at the corner of the gate, waited for the procession. He had not long to wait—executioners are very punctual. The trumpets of the sheriff's men rolling through the avenue of the houses on the bridge, poured out through the city like the cry of a giant and the neighbourhood was thronged with people in a minute. Master Barker maintained his place unnoticed; and the sheriff's men riding on into the wider street opening at the bridge-foot, he had an opportunity of pressing Dr. Maynard's hand, and saying, "God be with you!" before the issuing of the remainder of the procession. But they were forcibly separated by the gathering masses of people

before they reached Gracious Street, by which line of road the persons were led by special command of the bishop, that they might be taken through the busiest part of the city as a terror to the inhabitants.

It has been said, that the tragedy to be enacted this morning did not greatly interest the citizens, who seemed to be engaged in their every-day occupations as usual. That was the case only in a certain degree. The industrious, regular, money-getting citizen is the last to be moved by a popular feeling; reforms and revolutions are generally brought about by the highest and lowest classes, while the steady shopkeeper stays at home and reaps the advantages; and now, although there were thousands of people joining the procession to Smithfield, perhaps there were not, in the whole, half a dozen of householders who had stepped out of their way to behold it. But

as it moved by their doors, and addressed itself palpably to their senses, it had the effect of overcoming their caution or indifference—of making them think earnestly and fearfully on what was about to be done; and half the citizens of Fish Street, Gracious Street, Cheapside—and, in fact, of the whole line of the march—slipped on their gowns and caps, and followed the procession.

But, indeed, that procession was in itself, as a sight, an object of interest. In the front, to keep the passage clear by turning back horsemen and carriages, came a dozen of the city soldiery, under the command of the sheriff, David Woodroffe, the whole of them in full dress, with swords at their sides, and gleaves in their hands; behind these was a company of the lord chancellor's men, in whose charge were the prisoners, who came next, accompanied by the two Spanish friars, and guarded by a number of mounted soldiery on each side;

afterwards, two aldermen, attended by a mixed body of the bishop's men, the city watch, and constables engaged for the occasion, each one armed with a sword, and most of them with a bill or a battle-axe; and the procession was closed as well as preceded by a promiscuous crowd of the populace, which reached as far as the eye could see. But this part of a procession had always been too common in the city to attract much attention from the citizens, or from Barker—the prisoners were the great attraction; and truly the man who had not felt an interest in looking on them must have had a heart of stone.

The first thing to strike a free Englishman was, that the five men were tied together by a rope fastened round the middle of each; the next, that each bore a lighted torch and a faggot. But poor old Dr. Maynard, though he saw nobody, attracted to himself the notice of all. His cap he

had given to one of the gaol servants, and in its place had bound a napkin over his bald head. He had pulled off his truss, his nether-stock and coat—that is, the whole of his clothing—and, giving them to the poor prisoners that seemed to want, arrayed himself in his shroud, which was the only garment he had on. This awful robe, which reached about midleg, was fastened round his neck with a string, and round his waist by the rope, so that the outline of the old man's form was discernible, as well as his bare face and legs; and whether the people's enthusiasm at the moment cheated their very eyes, or whether the pious glory of the old man did really work a transformation in his bodily frame, certain it is that all who knew Dr. Maynard thought, as they looked on him, that his cheeks had been restored to the colour, his legs to the fulness, and his back to the strength of his youth. He did, indeed, walk along the streets, environed

by those soldiers, like a king marching to take possession of his crown. His eyes were turned to heaven, and a smile of exultation was on his face,—as the honest old Chronicler says, "being stripped into his shroud, he seemed as comely a person to them that were there present, as one should lightly see; and whereas in his clothes he appeared a withered and crooked silly old man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold."

The man who immediately followed Dr. Maynard would doubtless have imitated him in his martyr-dress if he had been able; but being a poor man with a family, unable to indulge himself with the luxury, he had sent home his coat, hat, and stockings, and now walked in his shirt bare-legged to Smithfield. The other martyrs had either no friends or no garments worth giving, for they went in their common garb. There was something exceedingly impressive in

the sight of that little band of men, preceded by a shroud, and bearing the emblems of their own death: but there was a source of interest ten thousand times deeper than all the instruments of torture and the symbols of destruction, and it was, that every one of these men was a voluntary sacrifice. The monks had to the last moment offered them life and honour with apostasy; and the prayers which they uttered, as they kept their eyes fixed on heaven, were less for courage in bearing the torture to which they were about to be subjected, than for courage to uphold and glorify the truth.

It has been said that the citizens took little interest in the ceremony before it was brought immediately under their eyes: the same may be said as to their feelings respecting such things in general. Executions for religion had been very common in the memory of grown-up persons; so that there was not much novelty in this. Executions

of noblemen and statesmen, too, had been common, whose notoriety was far greater than these humble persons: besides, all that was known as to this ceremony was gathered from the reports of the sheriff's men or the bishop's, in taverns and other public places; and as execution followed very quick after condemnation, it very frequently happened that a man was brought from his gaol to be put to death, without a person in the city knowing that an execution was intended. Such were some of the grounds for the apathy that had so troubled Master Barker in early morning: another was, that the fat and comfortable men of trade are very apt to take the part of governments; they are never the first to revolt against tyranny unless they are the first attacked; and it will be found that of the martyrs in this reign, the citizens of London did not furnish a number equal to their proportion to the general population, although the diocese of

London alone furnished more martyrs than all other parts of England. But still the citizens were men: when this horror was brought close to them, they comprehended it and pitied the victims. There was something in them that every one but a fanatic must pity. The perfect absence of bravado, the constant looking up to heaven, the fearless expression of countenance—all appealed to the courage, the religion, the simplicity of Englishmen. Even the lowest of the mob, who comprehended not the spirit of the scene, and indeed, knew not its termination, were struck into gravity by it.

It was the custom, in processions of this kind towards the place of execution for murder, robbery, arson, rape, etc., for the criminal to carry in his hand a purse, which he held out in supplication, and generally filled by the time he reached the gallows; the people knowing by this that he was penitent, inasmuch as the money was to be

expended in masses for his soul. Nothing of this kind was the case now; and many a cobbler and sempstress asked their neighbours whether the men were wizards or sorcerers, since they were evidently not men of personal violence; and when they found they were only heretics, out of a hatred to the violent Bonner, to the justice, to the city yeomanry, and to all the constabulary, they followed the train, quite willing to assist in rescuing the prisoners from a common oppressor, if they did not revere the men and justify their deeds. If a feeling of this kind had been general at the present time, it was not likely to be carried into effect; for though the populace probably numbered a hundred able-bodied men for each one of the procession, it would have been impossible to overcome the armed men without great sacrifice of human life—without, in fact, trampling them to death. The soldiery kept their own part of the

street clear—they were not in any way mixed with the people—for the Poultry and Cheapside, though wider than the streets in general, were still so narrow that the procession quite filled the road, so that the mounted soldiery cleared it, and the colonnades or coverts made by the projection of bed-rooms over shops, gradually received and held those pedestrians that were thrown aside by the cavalcade. At this time, however, there was little fear of an attempt at a rescue: executions for the most trivial offences were too common to allow persons to feel very strongly concerning any particular case. Besides, as before remarked, the people had been taken by surprise; they had not had time to consult each other, and warm themselves into fury by talking: this execution had not been notorious—there was no intercommunication on the subject: the procession went on quietly. Yet the very sight of those plain, simple, honest

men, led to death—the continued view of their steady countenances afforded by the long straight street of Cheapside, undoubtedly impressed the minds of many people; and the sound of a single voice crying "to the rescue!" would have acted like electricity on thousands of young hearts: but the voice was not heard, and the officers, with their victims, went unopposed out of Cheapside into Newgate Market, and soon to Newgate. Here were men stationed to preserve a passage; and a great crowd had gathered around of persons that could not pass.

But amid that throng of sturdy men there was a group of helpless human beings who gained more attention than all the rest, and whom every one avoided injuring—these were a young woman and four children, the eldest of which was not more than four years of age, and the youngest lay in her bosom. The woman looked sorrowfully

but steadily on the procession, and a quiet tear gathered in either eye as the prisoners came opposite, when one of them started, and, at all risks, sprang from the line, and without loosing his torch and faggot, threw an arm around the woman's neck, and kissed the children, who gathered about him, clasping his knees.

"Shall I never see you again, John?" the woman asked, in a broken voice.

The man said nothing, but continued to fondle the children.

"John, John, my good man!" said the woman, "what will the poor children do when you are gone?"

"They must do as I do," replied the man, his face covered with tears—"they must trust in God; they must follow him, even if he leadeth them into the fire."

"Are you sure, John, that you do well?" the poor woman asked.

"Mary, my dear wife," cried the man,

"think you I would leave you and these little ones, if I were not commanded by our blessed Lord? Shall I forsake him, or you?"

The woman said nothing, but stooped, and threw her arms around her children.

The procession had been somewhat delayed by the narrowing of the road through the gate; but it was now cleared, and the martyrs were thrust on.

When the band of martyrs entered Smithfield, they were escorted by tens of thousands of the people. Perhaps it was fortunate for the soldiers and constables that a body of their brethren was waiting to join them there, for on emerging from the narrow entry into Giltspur Street, the people could have closed on them, and trod them to death in a moment. But the prisoners were marched quickly into the circle; the regular soldiers and constabulary were distributed systematically around, their

weapons were prepared, and they had then the full command of the mob.

Smithfield was greatly changed since the early morning. Not only was the open space densely filled with common men and women, but the stands were closely packed with others of a better sort; the windows of all the houses, and the roofs of many, were crowded, even as far as Clerkenwell; the churches which commanded a view of this enclosure were covered with human beings, as well as the walls of the city wherever they faced the enclosure—nay, even the leads of Newgate were thronged with prisoners, of whom the criminals looked on the scene with delight, and the Protestants offered up prayers for their brethren. To add to the dissonance, and, as one would suppose, to the horror, the showmen began to exhibit their wares; the clown essayed his practical jokes on one stage—on another, a board made its appearance, on which was announced—"The famous mystery of the devil and the heretic—

the best seats, one penny;" and on another, a painting of some indescribable animal, under which was written—"Here you may se the strange fyshe from the Ile of Norwaye."

That great enclosure was a solid mass of human beings, in which there was not a vacancy, save in the ring formed in the centre, where stood the prisoners; and there the seats provided for visitors of importance were empty. As, however, St. Sepulchre's clock struck eight, a horseman made way through the people, bearing a note, which he delivered to the sheriff, the purport of which was, that his reverend lordship of London having been out late the night before, had been somewhat delayed in the morning, and desired the execution might be delayed half an hour that he might be present.

"Do ye hear, ye lousy knaves," cried the sheriff, "ye have half an hour longer to live than ye bargained for."

"I know not how to thank you," said

Maynard, "and truly as ye go about to take away all the years of our life, we shall hardly thank you for a half-hour. Nevertheless, honourable sir, if you will suffer me to speak unto this people, I will thank you heartily."

"Yea, thou shalt speak as long as thou list, if thou wilt recant," said the sheriff.

"Good sir," said Dr. Maynard, "within this present hour I look to stand in the presence of the great God; and I crave not to delay it. At such a time as this I cannot forswear my soul, nor would any Christian man utter a lie to keep himself from heaven. I wish to speak to this people as a dying man."

"Nay, then, if thou wilt not recant thy abominable doctrines, thou shalt not speak here. I think thou hast spoken too much already, since thy speaking hath brought thee into Smithfield."

The sheriff's men laughed heartily at this witty saying of their master; but the people

muttered, for they would have liked to hear the words of the venerable man. The sheriff turned his eyes for a moment towards Holborn Bridge and Newgate, by one of which roads he expected the bishop, when not discerning any movement like that occasioned by the approach of a great man, he turned to the aldermen, and said—

"What had we better do concerning this delay? If we wait for his lordship long, we can hardly be at the meeting of the Council, at ten."

"Truly, neighbour Woodroffe," replied the person addressed, "I think you had better get things in readiness—get the fellows well fastened to yonder posts, and the faggots ready, so that when his lordship cometh you can make short work of it."

"I think that would be well," said Master Woodroffe. Then he cried out loudly —"Here, smiths! bring your hammers, and tack me these fellows to their posts."

Two men immediately advanced from

the body of servants at one end of the enclosure, and released Dr. Maynard from his cord, when the old man, looking earnestly on the five posts, said—

"Which of these is my throne?"

"Thou mayest take thy choice, master," said the man—"I doubt no one will dispute thy right."

Then the old man stepped lightly to the nearest and most prominent post, and kissed it; then he took up the chain and kissed it also; then he spread the straw under his feet and covered it with dry and crackling heather, and leaning his back against the post, raised his eyes and hands to heaven, and said with a firm voice—

"Now, Lord Jesus, be thou with me for the sake of thy truth."

Barker had worked himself as close as he could to the barrier of the enclosure, and now, as the tragedy seemed to be beginning, he sprang over and caught the hand of his

friend, who with a care for him which he had not for himself, urged him to return, and not rush into the den of wolves. Before he could reply, the sheriff called out—

"What knave hath leaped over the barrier? Out with him, or strike him down with your gleaves!"

Barker stood quietly, as the men approached, and, perhaps, would have been roughly used, but that a voice in the crowd said—

"Let him be! it is the parson of Islington."

Barker stood still without speaking; but though there was nothing professional in his garb, which consisted of the common round cap and large cloak, a certain gravity of manner satisfied the men as to his order, and they went back to the sheriff, and said that the man was a priest.

"Leave him with the prisoners, then," said he; when turning to his friends, he con-

tinued—"yonder man is a priest. What think you, neighbours,—could not he preach the sermon, and so let us sooner dispatch the business?"

"Surely," replied the worthy aldermen; "the order of execution is sent to you by the justice, and doubtless you might not wait the bishop's leisure; but I think—what say you, brother?—the bishop will not be pleased if you neglect his request; and as he is your ordinary—"

"Truly," said the other alderman; "I would not anger his good lordship for a thousand marks."

The sheriff went to his men. Meanwhile the smith had been busy with the prisoners. As soon as Dr. Maynard had planted himself by the post, the smith took the chain, and passing it tightly round his waist, began to fasten it behind with a staple. At the first blow of the hammer, Dr. Maynard said—

"Strike smartly, friend, for the flesh is weak, and I would commit no folly. Strike smart, for the love of God; I would pay thee for thy trouble, but alack I have given away even to my hose."

Dr. Maynard, as soon as the man had done, tried the chain with both hands, and finding it firm, resigned it, and stood prepared for the end. The man who had gone next to Maynard in the procession, was now loosed from the cord, and, as he was about to be led to his post, said—

"Should I go in my truss still, Master Maynard?"

"Nay, friend Johnson," Maynard replied, "you were best to take it off. The truss will put you to more pain, and it will do good to some poor man here."

Then Johnson took off his breeches, which he gave to an old ragged man who seemed to look on with the bitter hatred of a bigot, saying—

"Here, friend, my truss is better than thine. I pray God we may meet again where thou shalt need not a poor gift like this."

He then gathered his shirt about him, and was likewise fastened to his post. Maynard then turned about to the three men that were still unstripped, and said with a loud voice—

"Lo ye, my children, this is a fiery trial of your faith that ye have to endure; but a single word will set ye free. What say ye—will ye go through the last extremity for the glory of God's truth, or will ye make your peace with this people?"

The three men looked at each other for a moment—one glance was sufficient, and one of them said—

"We have learned the truth from thee, Master Maynard, and God forbid we should forsake thee and our salvation now."

"Then God be praised for his goodness!"

cried the old man; "I thank thee, O heavenly Father, that thou hast called me to be a professor of thee, even unto death. I thank thee, that I bring with me these three children of my ministry; and strengthen them and me in this hour, that we may shew thy power to thy enemies."

At this moment, there was a stir of the people towards Holborn-bridge, and the sheriff glancing that way, beheld a company of horsemen approaching, when gathering his men about him, he rode into the crowd, calling out, "Make way there for his lordship the bishop!" The flourishing of the partisans, and the thrusts of the battle-axes, soon cleft asunder the solid mass of the people; and the Right Rev. Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, attended by his chaplains and a body of servants, made their way to the enclosure.

His lordship was clad now in a better manner than on the preceding night, his sub-

stantial legs being covered with hose of fine texture, his corpulent body with a black velvet gown, trimmed with fur, and his head adorned with a flat corner cap over a softer one of velvet; and as he took his seat on the front bench, and his chaplains and servants behind him, according to their different ranks, the muttering of the crowd was hushed, from admiration perhaps of the finery newly brought on the scene, and partly perhaps from a knowledge of the bishop's character. After a slight glance at the position of things, his lordship cried in a loud, but not angry voice, "Ho there, Master Sheriff! why this delay? I thought, by God, that everything would be ready for execution. Bring up the faggots!"

"Please you, my lord," the sheriff said, in a low voice, in the bishop's ear, "these wretches sometimes recant; and I thought your lordship would talk to them first."

"Well, well, Master Sheriff, it is all very

well, but I have no hopes of these; and besides, having other affairs on hand, I must make short work with them. Let your men get the faggots round them, and I will dispatch them in the meantime. Hallo, you heretical dogs!" he cried to the prisoners, as soon as the sheriff had turned to execute his orders—" hallo there, you naked rascals, are any of you in the mind to put on your clothes, and go home?"

"Nay, master," quoth one of the prisoners, "we have no clothing but what is fit for this place; for we have given away our hose and coats, and if we go through the streets thus clad, we shall be ashamed!"

"You are marvellous witty, fellow," quoth the bishop, "and that you should be, to be standing in that trim; for I have always heard that your gambler and your wit were like to go threadbare."

At this retort of the bishop, the crowd were dissolving into a quiet smile of appro-

bation: but the bishop's good humour, produced by a first glance of the church's vengeance on her foes, rapidly gave way to his more usual manner. "Enough of this," he cried; "tell me, fellows, whether ye be in the same mind as when I spoke to ye last?"

"May it please your lordship," Dr. Maynard commenced, when he was suddenly stopped by the bishop, who cried furiously,

"I spoke not to thee, neither shalt thou have mercy, Master Maynard."

"Oxford dubbed me doctor, before your lordship got that title."

"Yea, but I, thy ordinary, have taken from thee both thy doctorship and thy priesthood. Thou art no priest, but I tell thee, thou art a heretic and a perjured one! and by the Mother of God, thou shalt die the death. Therefore I speak to ye other men. Will any of you recant your devilish opinions, and be reconciled to the church?"

Dr. Maynard smiled, and his partners said nothing, when the bishop cried again—

"Why are ye speechless, knaves?—are ye deaf or doubtful? Settle your minds speedily, for ye see the sheriff's men are bringing in the fuel."

One of the prisoners then said—"We are unlearned men, that looked not to dispute with your doctors; but we believe, the Bishop of Rome hath no power over Englishmen, and that there is no mass in Scripture, and if that belief be worthy of death, here we are prepared to suffer, rather than belie the truth. Further than this, we speak not. Dr. Maynard hath taught us, and we will not open our lips when he is silenced; but we have followed his teaching until now, and we will not desert him."

"What! ye will not speak, knaves?" cried the bishop; but the men crossed their hands over their chests, and said nothing. Then the divine beckoned to the sheriff,

and turned round to converse with his chaplains. The sheriff's men brought forward two or three dozen of light faggots, together with several bundles of dried reeds, which they spread round about the prisoners; and at that moment there was a sight that drew tears from many an eye which had long been dry. Poor old Dr. Maynard, with a quaint simplicity of manner, perfectly in accordance with his character, but which would have appeared affectation in another, received handfuls of reeds from the men, and arranged them around his feet and legs as carefully as though they were the comfortable soft linen on his own bed at home. There was something almost childish or ridiculous in the care with which he did it; but it was the ludicrous of manner so mixed up with the pathos of situation and character, which goes into the heart more directly and deeply than the most laboured appeal. Thousands

that would not have wept at the consuming fire, wept now; and it was impossible to mistake the expression with which hundreds of persons around uttered from the depths of their hearts, "Poor old man!"

While the sheriff's men were arranging the faggots about the stakes, one of the chaplains stepped out from his seat behind the bishop, and ascended the pulpit. He took his cap off, and bowed, and opening a book, said—

"Sirs, my text is in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark: Si oculus tuus tibi obstaculo est, erue illum:—If thine eye hindereth thee, pluck it forth." The preacher commenced his sermon by an assertion that nobody doubted—namely, that there was only one true church; and proved it by a syllogism that no one disputed, as follows:—Major: two things that contradict each other cannot be true. Minor: but every church which differs from the church of Rome contradicts her. Ergo: one of them must be

false. Having settled this point, he proceeded with the same confidence to assert that the church of Rome was necessarily the true church, although the syllogisms were not quite so exact in the minor and the consequence. He however proved to his own satisfaction, that the antiquity and infallibility, the "Tu es Petrus," and the universality which they *claimed*, were sufficient proofs that the church of Rome was the only church of God; and finally enlarged on the necessity of lopping off all unprofitable members. "For look you, sirs," said the preacher, "if the husband and the wife do fall out in their house, how shall they carry on together?—as it is written, 'How shall two walk together, if they be not agreed?' and look you, the true believer is the spouse of the church. Likewise, if there be no king in the realm, shall not the state quickly run to confusion? As Solomon saith, 'a wise king keepeth the

people in order;' and behold, our holy father the Pope is king of all this world. Or which of you planting a tree, and looking for apples, findeth crabs, would not straightway pluck it up, and cast it into the fire? for doth not St. Mark say, 'Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire'? But I say, these men are worse than crabs, for they not only set all honest men's teeth on edge, but the whole church. Yet, behold the mercy of the church to her children! She would have grafted the true apples on these rough crabs, and watered them, and brought them to bear good fruit, and they would not. She would have reconciled them to their spouse, and they would not. Then what shall be done unto them? Shall we not say, as Christ said to the fig-tree, 'Ne posthac ex te fructus nascatur in æternum;' or as our text, 'Erue Illum?' But what do I say? Pluck forth the eye of the church! The

eyes of the church are the priesthood; and these are none. Shall I say, cut off the right hand? But the hands of the church are kings, and knights, and brave faithful men; and these are none. No, sirs! these neither are the eyes, the hands, nor the feet of the church; but filth and mire, to be trodden under foot. But what would ye, sirs! Of all God's foes, these are the worst. For behold, ye have heard of Lutherans and Anabaptists, but these are worse; ye have heard of Calvinists and Œcolampadians, but these are worse. Wonder, then, that fire doth not come from heaven and consume them, like Dathan and Abiram, when I tell you, they are 'Zuinglians.'"

The last word, pronounced in a deep and impressive manner, struck the audience very forcibly, and destroyed half their sympathy with the prisoners; and the priest, satisfied with the effect of his climax, descended from his pulpit. Dr. Maynard had listened at-

tentively, and even respectfully, as also his friends had done, to the sermon; and at the conclusion he begged to be allowed to reply to it, as indeed few such executions took place without witnessing a short scene of recriminatory logic between the victim and the slayer. But whether Dr. Boner had had sufficient of Dr. Maynard before, or wished to end the scene as soon as possible, he prevented it at once, by crying, "Nay, ye shall not speak, unless ye recant! If ye renounce your devilish opinions, as the preacher hath said, and join the Catholic church, ye shall speak!"

"Nay, my lord, to the last will I pronounce that the Bishop of Rome hath not the right ——"

"Stop his mouth there, ye knaves!" cried the Bishop. "Gag him, if he persist, and bring the torch!"

During the whole of this time, Master Barker had stood within the barrier, close

to Maynard, and very generally having his hand grasped in that of the old man, who was giving him spiritual advice, and recommending to his care certain persons and things in his village which still clung to his heart. He did not leave him when the torch was brought, and the Bishop observing him, cried—

"Ho, knaves! who is it that hath yonder heretic's hand?"

"It is a priest," said a voice near.

"A priest!" cried the bishop. "Ho, ho! Sir Priest, how durst thou take the hand of a man that is a heretic? Tell me thy name?"

Barker did not hear these interrogations; but some of the crowd said it was the parson of Islington.

"The parson of Islington! eh! By the mass, the man I looked for!" he said aloud; then he whispered to a servant, "Giles, see to our horses, that they be got ready; for

we go further, and perchance may have a long journey."

"Now, then, Mr. Sheriff," he said aloud, "put the fire to yonder fuel."

Barker was forced over the barrier by the sheriff's men, who applied torches to the fuel beneath each of the victims, and drew back in a larger ring to escape the heat. Maynard then turned to his brethren, and said, "Oh, my children, be steady for a few moments—take God for your strength, and ye shall feel no pain." Then he turned to the people, saying, "Fellow Englishmen, I pray heartily for this land, that she may speedily escape this tyranny;" but he was stopped by one of the sheriff's men, who struck him over the mouth with his gleave, saying, "Hold thy peace, knave!"

Then the old man looked up to heaven, and began the 22nd Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd, I can want nothing. He feedeth me in a green pasture, and leadeth me to a

fresh water. He quickeneth my soul, and bringeth me forth in the way of righteousness for his name's sake. Though I should walk now in the valley of the shadow of death, yet I fear no evil, for thou art with me—thy staff and thy sheep-hook comfort me." The old man was again interrupted, for one of the men threw a faggot on his head, crying, "Say thy prayers in Latin, heretic!" and Maynard spoke no more.

Barker looked on as far as this with a face wet with tears, and a heart bursting with grief and indignation; but at this moment he saw the old man's arm bending upwards in the flame, through the contraction of the sinews, when, horror-struck, he plunged into the crowd, and saw no more.

CHAPTER VI.

At about the time that Master Barker rushed from the fire in Smithfield, two persons were walking up the Barnet-road towards Islington, as unlike as possible to any of the people we have seen this day. It was a lady and gentleman, whose appearance was much more suitable to the beautiful June morning than the scene just described.

The gentleman, a tall upright man, whose peaked beard seemed grizzled by exposure rather than age, would have been pronounced a soldier by any one that had seen him,

from his stout boots that reached to his knees, the occasional gleam of a breast-plate from the opened front of his doublet, his robust face, and the stately charger that a mounted servant was leading behind, well loaded with arms offensive and defensive. The gentleman, however, was not equipped in full military dress; for instead of cuisses, he wore black satin upper stocks, slashed with white; instead of a war helmet, he had on a Milan bonnet of felt, adorned with a single ostrich feather, and over his breast-plate a doublet of purple velvet, the sleeves of which appeared through slits in a short, full cloak of blue satin, bordered with gold. But why dwell on the staid veteran, when his daughter waits to be described, and is much more worthy of description.

The young lady was somewhere about nineteen, tall, and not thin, voluptuously formed, without an angle, with a face that was neither Grecian nor Roman, neither

brunette nor blonde, but that combination of red and white and good-humoured modesty that sets all the world on fire, and is found nowhere out of England. Her dress, too, was not unworthy of a word. Her bonnet was like her father's in shape, but hers was of velvet, and bore a large plume of smaller feathers, which yet were sufficiently long to droop over her forehead. Her hair was not visible; and, however beautiful might have been the brown tresses floating over her neck and bosom, no person who looked on her face would have wished a part of it hidden by her hair. Her gown, of white satin, with a faint pink flower, seemed, in its stiffness and exquisite form, to be one solid piece moulded on her. The top of it, cut perfectly square, was thrown open on the shoulders, and continued unfastened to the waist, where it was gathered by a light broad chain of gold, and spread out like a flat cone to the ground. Where

the gown was open, appeared a kind of waistcoat of silver, elaborately embroidered, and above that, around her neck, was a high collar, of exquisitely fine lawn, worked in gold, which effectually prevented a sight of the minutest portion of the beauty of her bosom.

. These persons were Sir Thomas Granville, nd his daughter Anne, of Clawton Manor, n the neighbourhood of Islington. But his description of their dress has not been iven because they set a great value on it, r because I would have the reader admire . It is given to set forth the character of nne Granville, who was not going to see he fire in Smithfield, or even to purchase neries in Cheapside, but was on her way the Cross, to visit the poor blind girl and r mother. Her father having business, or engagement in the City, she had taken vantage of the beautiful morning to walk th him as far as the Cross, where she was

to wait until his return. Accordingly, when they arrived at the Cross, the Knight mounted his charger, and the maiden went into the cottage porch with Annot, who, hearing the voice of the good lady, had hurried into the road to welcome her. The serving-man having laid a packet at the feet of his mistress, went on behind his master, and the two maidens sat down, side by side, in the porch.

After the common salutations and mutual assurances of health, Anne said—

"Our silly Ralph hath told me a strange tale, good Annot, which I could hardly believe, though he affirmeth it to be true. He says that Dr. Bonner accosted him here last evening, and was near using him roughly."

"It is quite true, my lady," Annot replied, "and truly I think Ralph would not have escaped a whipping, but that he shewed them a nimble pair of heels."

"And how did the poor fellow offend?"

"He did nothing, my lady, that should offend a wise man. He did but utter a light word or two, according to his infirmity."

"I understand, Annot; and glad I am that he escaped from the bishop without a beating; for sure I am that my honoured father would not suffer any man to beat his servants, especially one so beloved as poor Ralph. My family hath resided for ages at Clawton, and not one of my forefathers was a traitor, a coward, or a heretic, and I see not that they are to be wronged by a person of ignoble race like this bishop."

"You should not be wronged by any one, my lady," said Annot.

"Nay, Annot," replied the young lady, "but persons of noble blood will sometimes be wroth, and we may pardon in them what we must punish in others. But hath not this bishop all the heretics of this nation to punish? Let him burn them if he will, but

let him not venture to injure the family of a true knight."

"I am a poor silly maiden," Annot said, with hesitation; "you will think me bold to speak, since I know nothing of honour and state, but only know what God teaches me from good books and my own poor thinking; but I would say—Doth not your ladyship think it more cruel that harmless men and women should be put to death for an honest opinion, than that a fool should be whipped for a saucy tongue?"

"It is so, Annot, truly. But to whip our fool toucheth us, whilst to punish heretics—but yet Annot, when I think more, it seemeth unwomanly to speak of human suffering in that manner. Surely the same God made all men, and it were not right to speak lightly of the torture of men because they belong not to us."

"Assuredly not, my lady. If you cast your eyes along the road to London, you

will even now see the smoke arising from Smithfield, where five men are consuming. My dear good lady, these men did never an ill act to a living soul, and the life of one of them hath been full of goodness—yet consider the torment of that cruel fire, and consider the wives and little children they leave behind, whom no one will dare to befriend."

"Annot, good girl, thou makest me weep," said Anne, wiping her eyes, "and little did I think I could weep for a heretic. But I tell thee, thou art mistaken if thou thinkest the widow and orphan have not friends, for I declare that even I would provide for them."

"Perhaps—perhaps—you would do it!" said Annot; "but how would the good knight take it? No, my lady, you would not dare, and even if you gave the families of these men a bit of bread, how shall you provide for the hundreds and thousands that are likely to be?"

"But, Annot, you know holy church commandeth us to hate heretics, and surely what the church commandeth is right. Yet, Annot, I confess to thee I wish such things were not necessary; and just as those punishments may be, I would not look on them for the world. My father invited me to go over to Smithfield this morning, as many other ladies have gone; but I requested to be allowed to say No. But I will talk to thee of this again; at present I have other business with thee. This is my birth-day, Annot. I am nineteen this day. It is also Midsummer-Eve, and you know the servants will have their gambols in the hall this evening, as it is an old custom, and perhaps a little on my account. Now, as we mean to be very merry, I am come over to invite you to join us."

"Good Lady Anne, what could I do—" Annot began, when she was interrupted by the young lady saying—

"Hear me, Annot. Would to God those pretty eyes of yours had the faculty of seeing, that you might enjoy the more; but you shall not be without pleasure. You shall not run about the hall with the men and maidens; but you shall sit at my side, and listen, and I will tell thee all that is done. I know that you love me; and sure I am that I am always happy when I sit with one I love, as I do now; and you will be happy. But you are always happy, Annot. I think our good God giveth a double portion of content and patience to those whom he depriveth of sight, for I know not of any person who is so gentle and hath so unruffled a spirit as thine."

"Dear Lady Anne, what have I to trouble me? I have a home, and a mother, and we find a market for our nets, so that we do not want."

"Happy are you, Annot, that you can look at your situation in such a manner,"

replied the lady, "and I will not point out to you what I would consider very hard to be borne. Yes, you are very much blessed that you can consider only the good in your lot, when thousands of the rich and the mighty are discontent with their fortune because they discern only that which is imperfect. But even if I could promise you little amusement this evening, Annot, I would have you come, because I know that you are always happy when those around you are, and I promise you we shall be very merry this evening."

"Dear lady, you are very kind to me. Perhaps I would like to go, but I fear—my mother——"

"No, no, I shall go up and ask her, and I know she will not forbid, as I called but now on Dame Margery, your mother's gossip, and bade her come up and sit with her. But we are not to have all the junketting to ourselves—for see here, I have

brought your good mother a neat's tongue and a capon fresh from the kitchen, and two bottles of wine, so that she and Margery can make merry, and tell all their old tales over until you come back. But what ails you, Annot?—you are crying!"

"I cried to think what a beggarly love mine is. I can do nothing to shew how I love you; and you—you are so bounteous to us that I almost fear to say how I love you, and how glad your visits make me, lest you should think I love you for your gifts."

"Pooh, child!" said the lady, pressing the blind girl's hand, "you are over nice. I wish you to love me; for believe me, I value your love higher than a thousand gifts. Such trifles as these are not worthy of mention: but if I had given you half my clothes, my jewels, and my fortune, you ought not to decline them, since every person should make up to a friend for the

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the flowers being of the commonest order, with the exception of a few from Lady Anne's garden, lately brought from Italy, which were very carefully tended by the blind girl. It was, indeed curious to note how exactly she knew the position of every thing growing, and how accurately she spoke of the progress of the flowers and buds, as she examined them with her fingers: in that respect, she had little to lament in the loss of sight—her sense of touch was not less perfect than another's sense of seeing; the only difference was, that she gained by long practice an accurate notion of a small space, such as a perfect eye would have acquired at a glance. While she was pointing out the characteristics of the various flowers, Mistress Anne was silent, when at length Annot said—

"I fear, my lady, you do not like our poor little garden and flowers."

"Yea, I do love them heartily," Anne

replied; "they seem to be the most beautiful flowers I ever beheld."

"Nay, Lady Anne," said Annot, "they are not like yours at Clawton, where your serving men tend them continually."

"I think them greatly more beautiful."

"Good lady, perhaps they appear beautiful to you because there be none other beautiful things about. Our poor cot is so far meaner than your goodly hall, while God's flowers are not less fair here than at Clawton, and therefore you think them more beautiful."

"Dear Annot, I was thinking somewhat like that. I was wondering that flowers should be as beautiful in the garden of a poor woman as in the queen's. It seemeth strange that a rose should be as sweet in the nostril of a beggar as of the emperor. How much better is God than man! How are the poor trodden under foot, imprisoned, and tortured, or at least condemned to a

ragged hut, and loathsome food! All this doth man do; and oh, what a blessing it is that the works of God cannot be marred—that the fair world remains as fair as at first—for, dear Annot, if men could alter the works of God to the senses of the poor, as they deprive them of other comforts, how desolate and hopeless would be the heart of the poor!"

"Yea," said Annot, "it would. It is good for a poor creature to know that the violet which groweth on every bank is as sweet as any rare flower of price, and as sweet to him as to the greatest; for it makes him feel that there is a Power stronger than man above us, and something around us and in us that tyrants cannot touch. But there is another greater and more blessed comfort for the poor, that they can be as good, and love God as truly, and worship him as devoutly, as kings and queens. It would be sad for the poor man

if riches and honours were esteemed by the great God: it is good, too, that the rich are fain to acknowledge their weakness before him; for I never heard of one that made himself better than a poor man in the eyes of him."

"Annot, my pretty girl, thou knowest not how truly I love thee: thy sweet patience and gentleness always make me better. I would thou wert my sister! But let us proceed up stairs to your good mother."

The two maidens then went into the house: but before they had ascended to the upper room, Miss Granville said, "You must come this evening, Annot, for, do you know, we have visitors! How did I forget it before! Among others, there is a friend who—I mean a friend of my father's—is, they say, a very handsome and brave young man. It is Harry Markham, Annot, from Waltham. He will come by this cottage. I met him at court, and two or t

times at other places, — and — and — you shall sit between us to-night, and tell me how you like him, for really they do say he is a very worthy man."

Annot made no reply, as she might have done if she had seen the lively blush that covered Miss Granville's face while she was speaking, but led the way to the bed-chamber.

As soon as her mother heard her foot, she cried—" Well, wench, what is it now? Why dost not keep to thy work?" But perceiving Mistress Anne, her tone immediately altered to the gentlest suavity, as she said, " By'r blessed Lady, it is the Lady Anne! Your ladyship doth us very great honour: I hope your ladyship, and the good knight, and all the worthy family, are well?"

" Quite well, dame," replied Anne, " and I hope this fair weather agrees with you?"

" Alack, no! My poor bones suffer sorely,

dear lady. Nobody can tell what I suffer!" the old woman cried, in her favourite querulous tone. "I am a poor afflicted creature —Saint Mary have mercy on me!"

"I am sorry that you are not well," said Anne; "I hoped this fine air would cheer you; but you must try to be merry to-day, as it is my birthday."

"Yea, is it, my lady? I hope you will have many of them."

"I hope so too, dame, if they are all to be as merry as I think this will be. But, dame, I am come over to invite Annot to the Hall, to make merry with us in the evening."

"Oh, my lady, I fear she must not go! Our trade is very bad, and money is scant, and food is dear."

"Oh! but, dame, you shall make merry, too. Margery will come up to you presently, and chat with you till Annot returns."

"But how will Annot get back? The poor afflicted wretch will never find her way back alone; and if you send one of the serving-men, he will be rude."

"Oh, dame! do you think I would trust our good Annot with one of the men? I would go back with her myself, rather; but Perkin is to come with her to join the sport in the Hall, and take care of Annot afterwards: for I will take care of her while she is with us."

"I doubt, my good lady, she may not go; for what can a poor cripple like me do? And Margery was here a day or two agone, and she can do nothing for me."

"I beg your ladyship to excuse me," said Annot; "my mother, you hear, desireth me to stay, and I would not leave her against her will."

"And who spoke to thee, thou saucy wench?" cried the mother. "Surely Lady Anne and I can talk without thy meddling.

How dost thou know I want thee to stay? I warrant I get as much work done if thou goest as if thou stayest."

"I think you will spare Annot to pleasure me," said Mistress Granville; "for trust me, dame, I think you are stronger and better than when I was here before. I am sure the wine I sent did you good."

"Yea, my good lady, I was better whiles it endured; but your good ladyship knoweth that a bottle of wine soon runneth out."

"Nay, dear mother, you forget that there is part of a bottle of ale."

The old woman raised her staff, and would probably have struck Annot over the head or shoulders, but that Lady Anne took hold of it, saying—

"It is true, dame, a bottle of wine will not endure long; and as the last did you good, I have brought you some more, as well as a little of our October ale, and a fat

capon, so that Margery and you may enjoy yourselves as well as we."

"I thank your dear ladyship. Your ladyship is very good to poor folks; and we have all reason to love your ladyship. But your ladyship doth not think I will waste your ladyship's good wine on such as Margery, when a farthing's worth of milk and a bit of bread is good enough for her. Fat capons and canary are fit only for poor afflicted widows."

"But I doubt Margery doth not love me sufficiently to pledge you in a bowl of milk when you drink to my good fortune. You must drink the wine with Margery to-day for the sake of my birth-day, and I will send you more by Perkin, which you shall take to do you good."

At this moment a loud rattling of the porch-door was heard, and Mistress Anne Granville was summoned below.

The cause of this interruption will be

shewn by a narrative of her father's journey. When Sir Thomas had reached about half-way to London, he met a company of horsemen, about a dozen in number, the principal of whom addressed him by name with the usual compliments; and after a whispered conversation of a very interesting nature between them, the knight turned back and rode with the party.

"It seemeth strange, my lord," said the knight aloud to his companion, as they were riding towards Islington,—"it seemeth strange that there should be heresy taught and practised in Islington, and I, living so hard by, not hear of it."

"I know not yet how far it is taught and practised; but I tell you I have very strong suspicions, and before another hour I doubt not to lay it open to you. Do you know Barker, the priest?"

"I know not the man, but I sometimes hear of him from my people."

"And how is he spoken of?"

"Why, I hear of him as a very zealous priest—one that liveth hardly, and attendeth to the poor and relieveth the sick."

"Ah! say you so, Sir Knight? that's the man, by 'r blessed Lady! I have always found that these heretic knaves pour their damnable doctrines into the ears of the sick and poor."

"Nay, my lord, your reverence mistaketh me. I said not that the priest tampered with the faith of the poor, but that he relieveth their necessities; and surely that shall not be taken as a mark of heresy!"

"You shall see, Sir Knight—by the Lord, you shall see! I will make a strict inquisition, and woe be to them that shall not abide it. But what do I say? I fear, Sir Thomas Granville, that even your household is not clear; for as I passed yonder Cross last even, I was accosted by a ribald knave, who I heard was a toy of yours;

and, by my faith, the fellow hardly escaped a whipping!"

"Mean you my fool, Dr. Bonner?" asked the Knight, drawing himself up proudly. "I trust your lordship did not lay a rough hand on him."

"Nay, he received no ill at my hands. He took to his heels before we had made an end of examining him. But yonder is Islington church, and I think this turning will be a nearer way than going by the Cross."

The party then turned up a horse-track, leading from the high road directly towards Islington church, and in a few minutes were at the porch. The knight, the bishop, and the chaplains, dismounted, and leaving their horses to their servants, went into the porch, when the bishop burst forth in a very torrent of curses.

This porch was one of the beautiful pointed arches of the fourteenth century,

whose simplicity of outline and elaborate tracery threw into the shade the finest porticoes of Greece, in the opinion of every mind not prejudiced in favour of classical forms. The spirit of a religion modified in expression in its progress through Saxon and Norman customs, seemed to have filled the heart and soul of the architect; and his workmanship was such as to create religious emotions in all who looked on it. But Dr. Bonner looked to be an architect of religion rather than of churches. He saw no beauty in the building; but he saw a monstrous deformity in what it covered. On the left hand, within the porch, was a kind of reading-desk, about four feet from the ground, on which was a well-thumbed folio volume, fastened to it by a strong iron attached to the oak covers. This book he knew at a glance to be heretical—in short, no other than the Book of Homilies fixed in all the churches in Edward's reign.

Justice cannot be done here to Dr. Bonner's eloquence, which consisted of a vast variety of oaths not pleasant either to hear or read. When a divine does swear, his oaths are richer than all others, deriving great variety from his religious learning. But bishops and priests are privileged in the matter of swearing, because the very language which would be horrible in the mouth of a layman may be legitimate objurgation or remonstrance in the mouth of a churchman. But Dr. Bonner did not confine himself to the phraseology of his profession, which would have afforded grounds for a Jesuit to prove that his language had the essence of the Fathers: he swore large "hunter's oaths," he talked "like a fishwife" or a catchpole caught in a trap by apprentices. But this must be understood—not related.

"Behold!" said his lordship, "said I not that this was a nest of heresy—damnable treason? Lo! here is a book which hath

been for a whole year forbidden by the Queen's council. Homilies, indeed!—stinking and rotten treason! Doth it not deny the pope's supremacy here in England? Doth it not make that peevish abortion, Edward, head of the church? Doth it not abolish mass, and five sacraments, and priestly celibacy? To hell with the book! Here, knaves, knaves! bring me a hammer, or send for a smith, and wrench me this door open!"

"I crave your pardon, my lord!" cried Sir Thomas Granville; "perhaps the priest liveth close by, in which case it would be well to abstain from violence."

"Violence!—violence!" cried the Bishop; "doth not this parish of Islington do violence to our commands? But, Giles!" said the Bishop, running into the churchyard, "ride into the village, and inquire for the priest, and bid him come to me; and if thou canst not find him, seek a churchwarden, and

when thou hast found him, bring him hither, even if thou tiest him to thy horse; and if he be not there, bring me a smith with a hammer and a bar of iron."

While Giles was gone on this voyage of discovery, the Bishop walked muttering about the churchyard, peeping in at the church windows, and examining the tombstones, as though he would have loved to take up the dead to examine into their orthodoxy. What he found in the tombstones can never be known, but his glances at the interior of the church were by no means satisfactory, if one might judge by the testy manner in which he walked about, the heat of body which made him loosen the points of his doublet, and the earnestness with which he looked for the return of Giles. At length the serving-man returned, accompanied by an old man with a long beard, who looked like a small farmer, and who was one of the churchwardens.

"Oh!" quoth the Bishop, "Sir Priest feareth to meet me. He hath not yet returned from Smithfield: but I will give him enough of Smithfield before I have made an end with him. Now, old man, tell me, dost thou know yonder book?"

"Yea, master, I do know the book," replied the old man; "and a very good book it be."

"What! knave, a good book! Dost thou read in it?"

"Nay, master, sure I never read it, nor any other book."

"What! not thy psalter?"

"No, master."

"And why?"

"Please you, master, I cannot read."

"Not read, thou fool! why sayest thou, then, that it is a good book?"

"I only know what the people and the minister tell me."

"Minister! thou heretic! Dost thou mean thy priest?"

"Nay, master, we have no priests here since good King Edward came to be king."

"Good King Edward! Villain! dost thou know whom thou speakest to?"

"No, master."

"I am thy bishop. Now thou knowest me, and shalt know me better yet."

"An't please your worship, I don't believe you be our bishop, for the bishop that I have seen here were a mild-spoken man, and not fat, and not given to swearing; and his name were Ridley."

"God's curse upon thee, thou fool! I tell thee I am thy bishop, as thou shalt find if thou givest me another saucy word. Hast thou the key of the church?"

"Yea, master."

"Then open it."

But as the Bishop said this, a sudden thought occurred, which changed his manner, and he continued his questioning in a very mild and affable manner as follows:—

"But just tell me, good man, when yonder book was put up?"

"In King Edward's time."

"And doth your priest—I mean your minister—often read in it to you?"

"Nay, sir, not he; he hath books at home and in the church."

"What! books of this kind—I mean of the new religion."

"I cannot tell you, master, for I ben't much learned."

"Who, then, my good man, hast thou seen reading this good book at the church door?"

"Oh, master, only some of the poor wretches—not the like of you and I."

"Doth any of them live close by?"

"Why, there be some that do read it, I think; but I never saw them. There is one man, indeed; but he liveth not here."

"And what is his name?"

"Oh, one Needham."

"And who have you seen him reading to?"

"Oh, master, only to poor silly fools, blind girls, and what not."

"What! the blind girl by the Cross!"

"The same, master."

"What is thy name?"

"John Smith, an't please your mastership."

"Then, John Smith," cried the Bishop, loud and furiously, "I tell thee thou art the vilest knave I have met this many a day. The Needham thou mentionest is now in my custody, and the heretic Ridley, whom thou callest bishop, and whom the damnable bastard Edward stuck in my lawful place, is in prison, and shall die; and by my soul, I will have thee within four stone walls with chains on thy legs!"

"Nay, I pray you, master," said the old man, in terrible fear—"I pray you don't hurt me, if you be a bishop; for Bishop Ridley always gave me a civil word."

"I tell thee, man, Ridley was no bishop; but such as he is, he is now in prison, and shall die the death, as thou shalt. Scoundrel! didst thou not receive our mandate to remove from the porch all pestilent books like that, and give us a notice what persons in the parish read or heard them?"

"Nay, master, I know nothing about it. They make me warden, and I see the bells rung, and the wine got, and the noisy boys whipped——"

"Open the door," interrupted the Bishop; "and let us see what order is within—a rare filthy nest, I warrant."

When the door was opened, the bishop started back, aghast at the sight; then calling on the knight and the chaplains to follow him, rushed into the church. There was little of a very frightful nature visible: it was a small church, of which the floor was covered with rude seats of ancient wood; the walls of clear white were inscribed with

a dozen sentences of holy writ, and the communion table was covered with a plain cloth. But of all the horrors imaginable to man, this was the worst, in the opinion of Dr. Bonner.

"Look there, sirs! look there, Doctor! look there, Sir Thomas Granville! Saw ye ever before such a den of filth as this? By my father's soul, I never saw the like, and I pray God these cursed walls do not tumble on our heads. Follow me, follow me!"

The Bishop strode up to the chancel, where was a reading-desk similar to the one at the door: he rushed up to it, and having glanced into the book, wrenched off the iron chain, and threw the folio away with all his might.

"Bibles! Bibles!" cried he; "nothing but Bibles. By God, this parish ought to be burned to the ground with every soul; for if there had been a single Christian in it, such a vile hole as this could not have been so near London and I not know it.

Would you believe, sirs, that yonder book is the Bible—Coverdale's Bible, which was ordered to be destroyed a year past? By God, sirs, the worst book ever brought into the realm! for it hath made more heretics than all other. Now, John Smith—hey, you villain, what art thou?"

The cause of this last exclamation was, that as the bishop turned towards the churchwarden, he observed a person take up the Bible, and place it very carefully on the desk—this person, as he turned about, the bishop discovered to be Master Barker, the minister.

"God-a-mercy, fellow!" quoth the Bishop, "thou art bold to take up a book that I have cast down."

"It is the Holy Bible, my lord."

"The holy devil, knave! Art thou the parson of this church?"

"Yea, my lord."

"Then didst thou not receive our man-

date ordering thee to erect a well-favoured rood of goodly stature, and the other necessary ornaments of the altar, while thou hast nothing but a table?"

"Please you, my lord," interposed the churchwarden, "the old rood was pulled down in Edward's time, and now we be so poor we cannot——"

"Get thee out, fool!" cried the Bishop, "I will have thee to give answer at my consistory in Paul's; and thence thou wilt go to Newgate. But, Barker, what meaneth these writings on the wall, taken out of yonder forbidden book? Did I not send thee, on the 15th of October last, that thou shouldest abolish and extinguish such scriptures and paintings on thy walls, so that by no means they could be either read or seen, warning thee that thou and thy churchwardens, yea, and thy parishioners, too, should appear before us and be excommunicated for lack of doing it? Didst thou not receive my mandate?"

"Yea, my lord."

"Then why hast thou not obeyed it?"

"Please you, my lord, to hear me patiently; I will explain it."

"Patiently, knave!" the Bishop began to bawl, when the Knight stopped him by observing—"I pray you, my lord, hear the worthy priest; it seemeth to me unreasonable that a man should be condemned without a hearing."

Bonner then maintained a sullen silence while Barker said—

"My lord, I was ordained to the ministry of Christ by Dr. Cranmer, in the time of King Edward. There were then the rood, the pix, the altar, and all other necessaries for performing the popish ceremonies——"

"Popish! thou rascal!" cried the Bishop, "dost thou not know that word is forbidden?"

"I beg pardon, my lord, I would say the Romish church——"

"Nay, why sayest thou not the Catholic church?"

"I mean, my lord, the church in which you are a bishop. I was commanded by my bishop to renounce those things, and in their stead to place a Bible conveniently in the church, and the Book of Homilies in the porch, and to write certain portions of Scripture on the walls for the edification of the people; these orders I obeyed, as I was bound to do."

The bishop would not dispute that, as he had in some measure obeyed the laws of the church in Edward's time; he contented himself with demanding—

"Why, then, dost thou not obey the present laws, which come with greater authority than any other?"

"My lord, I see it is very common for men to change the object of their obedience according as monarchs and fortunes change, and ambition directeth them; but I have no

ambition but to do my duty in a little poor village like this. I will not say what I might do if I had belonged to the priesthood in Henry's days; but I was ordained under Edward, and expressly taught the things which your lordship forbids; and the oaths I then took I cannot be loosened from. My connexion with the English church knoweth nothing of the rood and the altar; and, my lord, they cannot, I think, be imposed on me; for if they can, the laws of man be stronger than the laws of God."

"No, man; but thou art bound to obey the just laws, and observe the true religion, even though thou hast sworn to the false."

"I know not, my lord: every man thinketh he hath truth, and there is no sure judge but conscience. But having been sworn to observe the faith which was lawful in Edward's days, and which I believe is according to the express Word of God, I

am bound to pursue it. The Word of God can never be like the passions of men which change with every circumstance. The commands even of a King cannot absolve me from the oaths taken to God, for if they can, the faith of men must follow the successes of battles, or treason, or murder; the man that hath rule maketh the faith, and I must be bound to obey the commands of Mahmoud, if the Grand Turk conquer this country."

There was something in this speech that grated on the ears of Dr. Bonner, although it was uttered in an humble manner; and almost before Barker had finished his sentence, his lordship rushed towards him, crying—

"Turks! thou—thou ribald knave!" and raising his hand, struck at him. Sir Thomas Granville, probably fearing the bishop might commit himself, stepped forward to beg for peace, when his lordship's

holy and heavy fist came full on his ear, and sent him spinning against the benches two or three yards off.

"What meanest thou by that, priest?" cried Sir Thomas Granville, highly indignant at this blow; but the Bishop made no reply, being struggling with his chaplains to get at Master Barker.

"I ask thee, Dr. Bonner, what thou meanest by striking me?" he cried again. "Let me tell thee that no man, whether priest or soldier, shall strike me with impunity."

"And what meanest thou by thou-ing me, thy Bishop? I tell you, Sir Thomas Granville, that I grievously suspect you; and as soon as my suspicions are verified, neither thy knighthood nor thy soldiership shall save thee. Nobler names than thine have been dealt with for heresy, and shall again."

"False priest, I defy thee!" cried the

Knight. "None of my family have ever been tainted with heresy, and none have borne the chastisement of a priest. I have fought the battles of three monarchs, and my forefathers have been foremost wherever England required brave men, whilst thy ancestors have borne trenchers and scoured pewter in kitchens!—and thou, to strike and revile me! I will appeal to her majesty against thee, and if I do not tie thy hands and thy tongue, never trust me!"

"I spit upon thee, thou heretic!" cried the Bishop, out of his senses with passion.

"Englishmen!" cried the Knight to the parishioners, who had flocked in considerable numbers to the church—"Englishmen! your hear how this shaven priest revileth brave men. Take away Master Barker with you, and keep him out of the man's hands. I give you notice I will put up a rood at my own charges, and I will at once appeal to her majesty, who will stop this wild beast."

Master Barker would have stayed and besought a further hearing, but the Knight was now as imperious as the Bishop, and the people obedient to him, and anxious for the fate of their minister, forced him away.

"Now, Dr. Bonner, you may tarry here as long as it pleaseth you," said the Knight; "but I warn you that I am sworn to keep the peace of her majesty's subjects, and shall send down a body of my servants to watch over this village if you do not depart; and as I promise to set up a rood in this church, any violence put on the people will be at your peril. And you know you dare not do more than cite suspected persons to appear before you in a lawful court."

Having said this, the Knight strode out of the church, mounted his horse, and rode away with his servant. On arriving at the Cross, he summoned his daughter; and ordering her to walk home immediately, under the care of the servant, put spurs to his

horse, and rode to Clawton to gather his men.

Dr. Bonner, sore troubled at this termination of his expedition, walked furiously to and fro like a wild beast disappointed of his prey. He would, doubtless, have followed Master Barker, or hunted him out, but a glance into the village, where knots of strong men were gathered together, satisfied him that he and his half-dozen of serving men would be roughly used, if they made any attempt; and though he utterly disregarded Sir Thomas Granville's remonstrances with the Queen, he by no means wished to come at present in conflict with his armed retainers. He, therefore, mounted his horse, to return to Fulham. But as he was leaving the churchyard, a young gentleman, attended by two servants, rode up from the Essex road, and seeing the bishop, stopped and saluted him.

"You are very welcome, my good friend

Harry," said the Bishop; "I wish you had come half an hour earlier, for I have been sore beset by some heretical ruffians, and doubted whether I should escape with life."

"You, my good lord!—would to God I had been here! But our swords are ready for you now, if you will direct us to your foes."

"It is too late now, Master Markham—we are returning to Fulham. I trust your worthy father is well."

"He is well, my lord—but, pardon me, when you honoured our poor house, I understood your lordship's visitation would end yesterday."

"It was so, my friend; but we were detained near Barnet by some pestilent schismatics whom we took to Fulham after nightfall; but suspecting this parish, we returned to day, and, by my soul, I think we have discovered the foulest hold of heresy in this kingdom!"

"Ah, say you so, my lord!—then I trust you will not depart without seizing the malefactors."

"I think we must; but the Queen's majesty's soldiers shall make short work with them. At present the people are too strong for us."

"Nay, my lord, I and my men, with your own servants, will engage to deliver into your hands the stoutest heretic that Islington holdeth."

"You are a bold warrior for the church, my friend; but I fear we are too weak for this people. Nevertheless, if you incline to do a good deed for the church, you can do it without risking our safety. There is a cottage at the Cross, in which liveth a naughty wench, who is blind, and she, I suspect, is a notorious favourer of heresy."

"I will bring her to your lordship speedily," cried Markham, preparing to apply the spur, when the Bishop said—

"Then, Master Markham, I will leave two of my men with you, for I must return to London, and you shall deliver the woman to them, who will take her to Fulham. God speed you!"

The Bishop and his men then left the village by the horse-track formerly mentioned, and Markham, accompanied by two of the Bishop's men, and his own servants, rode up to the Cross to seize the heretic. This there was little difficulty in accomplishing. Annot had resumed her work as soon as Mistress Anne had left, and Markham had merely to take her, and set her before one of the Bishop's men, and the thing was done.

END OF VOL. I.

T. C. Savill, Printer, 107, St. Martin's Lane.

MIDSUMMER EVE:

A Tale.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1842.

MIDSUMMER EVE.

CHAPTER VII.

At the time when the occurrences just described were taking place—when heroism and cruelty, generosity and malevolence, frankness and suspicion, were exhibiting in the broadest lights the diversities of human character, a scene of a somewhat domestic and very sacred nature was in course of action a few hundred yards distant, which, though it might not at first seem to have a bearing on our narrative, was in reality one of many scenes that directly produced the guilt, and gave opportunities for exhibiting

the virtues described. It was a woman confessing herself to a priest.

The confessional was not in a church or chapel properly so called; but was itself a room small enough to be a closet attached to a bed-chamber or a dining-room. There was nothing in the magnitude, the proportions, or the details of the room to make it remarkable: it was merely a cube whose sides contained three yards respectively, surmounted by a plain pointed roof. It required, however, to be accustomed to the place, before a stranger could be sure of its extent; for though it was now a bright sunshiny morning of June, this room was in darkness, save in one little spot, where a circle of brilliant light was thrown on the face of a crucified Christ in ivory, wherein the artist had displayed all the agony and horror, without the Divine love, of the tremendous sacrifice.

This bold light was directed to the sacred

spot by means of two colourless panes parallel with the head of the rood, in a double window of dark coloured glass, by which contrivance, the Divine face was in an intense glare from sunrise till sunset, while the room was in almost perfect darkness; saving at times when, religious duties not being about to be performed, certain screens were removed, which allowed entry of the common daylight. At present, all the light in the room was in the face of the Saviour; and one not accustomed to the darkness would not have readily perceived the designs of the gorgeous tapestry on the walls, the furniture, or the persons in the room.

On three of the sides, the tapestry represented the most remarkable events in the life of the Virgin Mary, most elaborately executed by continental artists from designs by Raphael. On the fourth side was a kind of altar, there being the Rood or Crucifix, and a painting of St. Mary the

patroness over it: but it was evident that this was a place for private and personal devotion, rather than for the celebration of the formalities of the church, since the altar or table contained no pix, and was of course without the implements used in celebrating mass. In front of the crucifix was a chair covered with crimson velvet, the back of which was surmounted by the English crown; and on this sat a man whose shaven face and head, and dingy garments, proclaimed him to be a friar. Before him were two cushions of crimson velvet, on one of which was embroidered the arms of England, and on the other those of Spain.

At the present moment both of these cushions were unused: but the person who should have used one of them lay on a couch opposite the friar; her pallid countenance, deep-sunken eyes, and quick breathing, being sufficient excuse for not assuming the humble position indicated by the cushions.

If a third person could have looked on those two, there would have been discovered sufficient to awaken his interest even without hearing a word spoken, or comprehending the position of the parties: but he that perfectly understood their relation to each other and to society, would have found matter for thought as serious and important as the world could furnish. The friar, whose garb was utterly without show and tinsel, was thin and emaciated: his eyes were bright and piercing, and his countenance, if it spake not of actual cruelty, wore an habitual expression of cunning and want of passion which might in any emergency, through want of sympathy with human weakness, have produced cruelty. The woman, as before stated, was sick; her countenance also was not expressive of cruelty; but there was a shadow deeper than melancholy, an anxiety even more intense than fear, a sorrow sharper than

human sadness in her sallow countenance, that spoke of a long course of past wretchedness and of present discontent: her face, sombre and chilling, seemed one that could never smile, and no one that looked for pity would have willingly sought it from her. Woe unto them whose happiness rested on her! And that woe was deep and wide—it was not confined to a family, or a district: nations darkened in looking on the face of that miserable woman—for she was the Queen of England.

Yes! these two persons were Queen Mary and her Confessor. At the time we behold them, the sins of the communicant have been confessed, and the absolution has been given. This absolution was perfect and unconditional, which undoubtedly spoke well for the personal habits of the queen; for though, perhaps, a courtier might not discover in any action of a monarch or other person of royal blood aught which required

penance, it was very different with the friar; —he well knew that flattery would not make much impression on so stern a character as hers, while she would have obeyed with the utmost alacrity any penance which the church had imposed; so that if he had any private purposes to serve, he would have best accomplished his object by inflicting a punishment.

The tone of the following address was therefore a proof that the queen's life was one of innocence, so far as the church was concerned, though this leaves undiscussed the subject as to how far the tenets of that church were consistent with abstract virtue and charity.

"Daughter," said the friar, "very rarely doth it happen that the honest confessor hath cause to rejoice that he liveth in a palace, and that his children wear crowns and sit on thrones. Power and wealth corrupt the heart more than all other tempta-

tions; wherefore the church, to secure a holy and zealous priesthood, hath well provided that we shall possess no wealth or power, but be in all things subject to our superiors. But, as thou art named after God's holy mother, even so hast thou her blessing; for well might it be said unto thee, 'Hail Mary, blessed among women!' since neither adversity nor prosperity, prison nor palace, hath been able to quench the light of truth, or destroy the spirit of goodness in thy heart. But, daughter, know that even for this, God looketh for recompence; the precious gift of holiness requireth gratitude; and though I may not call on thee for acts of mortification for thy sins, I call on thee for acts of thanksgiving for righteousness.'

"Very glad, father," replied Mary, "will I be to do and suffer whatever the church commandeth for the glory of God."

"I know thou wilt, daughter," said the friar. "This morning giveth

proof that thou art faithful: the just punishment of five heretics for their abominable blasphemy shall be highly pleasing to God."

"Yet, my father, in this which thou commendest I see cause to fear. I would gladly do all I can to rid heresy out from the land; and yet the English people love not these executions, saving for apparent offences against the person, such as murder and robbery."

"Yea, but the servant of God is not to please the people of England or any other people: the true church must be upheld, whether the people approve or not."

"Yet," said the queen, "this path is one of peril, both for me and the church. For not only may the people murmur, but the lords of the church, some of my most trusty councillors, set their faces against these punishments. My beloved cousin, Cardinal Pole, hath openly said that heresy can never

be extirpated by similar punishments; my Lord Chancellor, the Bishop of Winchester, shrinketh from it as a dangerous cruelty; and my dear cousin and father, the Emperor, declareth that after the death and the torture of many thousands of his subjects, these heretics are never the fewer."

"Yes, oh Queen! I doubt not but such be their words. These are all politic men —men who look to the safety of a kingdom as much as to the advancement of religion; and if you care to preserve this golden crown of England more than to uphold the church, you shall be guided by their counsel. But, daughter, the gratitude you owe for the many blessings you have latterly received, shall not be shewn by your setting this realm before the church—by conniving at the abominable opinions which are ruining the souls of the people. God who hath given you this realm expecteth you to establish his faith in it on a sure foundation, and

if thou losest the kingdom, thou losest for his sake only what he hath given thee. But, believe me, daughter, thou shalt not lose one yard of this fertile land; for God will bless the work which thou undertakest for him."

"Truly, for mine own part," said Mary, "I owe these Lutherans no good will."

"Assuredly not: you should be bereft of all the passions of mankind if you carried not in your heart every moment the fresh remembrance of the intolerable injuries you have suffered. Yea, daughter, my heart is filled with sorrow when I think of it; for truly even the infamous agony of the wretches burnt in Smithfield equalleth not in pain the slow torture, consuming the soul and the body, which you most unjustly and most patiently have borne. I call God to witness, but that for your example of patience, and your power to strengthen the church, better would it have been for you

that you had been the daughter of a poor husbandman; for what peace until now have you found?"

"Alas! father, I have not found peace even to this hour!" cried the Queen, plaintively.

"And who hath been the enemy that deprived you of this common blessing of man?—which the ploughman findeth in his heart in the midst of his toil, as well as the monarch in his luxurious ease! By whose contrivance was your royal mother disgraced and put away from the throne which she adorned, and the bed which none but she pressed with a pure body and innocent conscience? Yea, who turned her away from husband, and child, and home, and made her the talk of the meanest boor in Christendom as a mere wanton,—and yet the child, a bastard?"

"Father, you are too bold!" cried the Queen, her face covered with tears, and her voice somewhat expressive of wrath.

The friar immediately bent on one knee and said—"Your grace hath in me the humblest of subjects; and before you should suffer a moment's pain, I would very gladly die; but in our present relation, I represent God himself, and I must speak the truth, however unpleasing, to the monarch as well as the peasant."

"Take your chair, father," said the Queen, "you do well; and I will listen to you as humbly as I may."

"Your majesty," replied the friar, without rising, "shall discern in what I say nought beyond what lies in my duty as a servant of the church; and if I appear to speak too boldly, I pray your majesty to recollect whose servant I am. Yes, daughter," continued the friar, seating himself in his chair, "your life hath been one lingering martyrdom. Your excellent holy mother, Queen Catharine, the daughter and aunt of the greatest emperors of the world

thrust out like a mean hosteler's wife from the bed she hath defiled, to live disgraced amid the scorn of heretics and the beggarly pity of common people. Yourself, by acts of the parliament and the general voice declared illegitimate; yea, and compelled by brute force to acknowledge its truth, and so to defame your holy mother, the blessed Catharine! Did you not live to see other women of lower birth and corrupt lives preferred to that pure lady, and the parricide Edward, and the heretic daughter of your mother's murderer sit in the place whence you were driven? Yes, while your father, by evil counsellors, kept you poor and needy, these bastards sat by him on his throne, and laughed at your calamities. By whose contrivance did that peevish Edward in raw childhood command that you should forsake the religion of all your forefathers; that you should not frequent the holy sacrament of the mass; that you should be a

prisoner surrounded with spies; and that you should never sit on the throne of England, which was your undoubted right? who, even in your own happy reign, hath proclaimed Lady Jane Dudley Queen—who have preached against your right—who have raised rebellions—who would have prevented your happy marriage, and even now lay plots with the Lady Elizabeth against you?"

The friar paused, when the Queen said, "Truly all this have the Lutherans done unto me."

"Yes, they and they only," replied the friar. "For who a better husband, father, and King, than Harry your father, until the middle of his days? Yes, he was a kind, a noble, a gallant Englishman. And, my daughter, is it not enough to make the very name of the heretics hateful, to think that, from the moment when he gave a ready ear to heretical doctrines, he became a

brutal husband and father, the murderer of his people, and his name a by-word for cruelty and wickedness? Oh, daughter! never forget that the bitterest enemies of the church are your own enemies! Remember that the Cranmer who expelled the true worship from this realm, was the man that expelled your mother from her husband's house, and yourself from the throne. Never forget that the Ridley who usurped the seat of the church's faithful friend, Dr. Bonner, in the see of London, was the same that preached at Paul's Cross against your right. Never forget that the men who followed the banner of 'Queen Jane' were the same that trod altars under foot, broke up the sculptures of St. Mary to throw on the horse roads, and dashed the sacred face of the rood against the walls."

"Father—dear father!" cried the Queen, "I remember this right well; but what should I do? The parliament seemed

slack in framing laws that would effectually establish the church."

"Parliament!" cried the friar, in disdain—"parliament is called into being at your word, and it expireth at your pleasure. There needeth no further laws,—laws enough are in force already for this purpose. The ecclesiastical courts of this kingdom can accomplish all I desire, if you command them to proceed earnestly."

"Would to God I knew certainly what I should do!" exclaimed the Queen. "It seemeth to me there is great justice in what you say; and yet my council, and even the bishops, are divided on this point. Dr. Tonstall even, who hath suffered greatly, is very backward in enforcing the laws against these people."

"Woe be unto them that sacrifice their God to the idle breath of the people's applause!" cried the friar. "Many a man that wisheth well to the church, and would

herds of the Christian flock in
times. On what grounds can
of God be suffered to live?
are merciful? Oh, daughter,
victims that have perished
Henry and Edward. I speak
saints that have been impriso
tured, but of the flames lighted
and all his followers whenever
Shall not their own measures b
to them? Yea, oh Queen o
realm, if even this Cranmer d
men and women for following
faith of their fathers in the
people who clung to the tru
much more shall you destr

"Might not imprisonment and wholesome correction accomplish this?" asked the Queen.

"No," was the reply—"the heretics that defame the church dispute your right, and acknowledge no allegiance. Correction! that will only engender irritation among the people, without compelling obedience; but the stake and the gibbet shall extirpate the highest and most powerful of the disturbers, and through terror shall enforce the silence and submission of the rest."

"I will, with the King's permission," replied Mary, "command the bishops that they keep very strict watch over their dioceses; and God grant that this foul heresy may be utterly extinguished."

"You do well, my daughter; but even this is a light work for a faithful servant of the church. But you have already commanded the bishops that they keep strict charge over their dioceses; and I know not

that any besides Dr. Bonner have obeyed you; and your commands may yet be disobeyed, as they have already been. The pious realm of Spain offereth a happy example to England. The Spaniard hath a commission always sitting where every suspicious person can be examined and punished secretly; and the terror of this tribunal keepeth the people faithful."

"You mean the Holy Inquisition. Alas, father, I would gladly see so good a work commenced among my people; but the English people have such notions of liberty and justice, that the very mention of it was like to produce a tumult, even as happened at Naples, under my dear father the Emperor."

"Yea, daughter, the inquisition may not be established yet in England; yet a commission might be appointed, and you might command that every priest, and knight, and justice, and constable, should keep strict

watch over their parish, and send up the name of every suspected person; and a body of soldiers might be appointed to bring these persons for examination."

"But there is a commission now sitting at Mary Overy's; and commands have been sent to all sheriffs, and constables, and other persons in authority."

"Yea, daughter, but out of London the persons are slack in obeying; and the courts are dependent on the temper of the person who presides. I would have a commission in London that should have jurisdiction over the whole realm, so that justice might certainly be done."

"I will essay this work willingly," cried the Queen; "and it shall be done, if the parliament will consent to it."

"Parliament!" cried the friar—"it must be done if you resolve it. If the parliament now sitting refuse this wholesome plan, you can heavily fine the most ob-

stinate part of them, and send them back, and command the shires and the boroughs to send up loyal men who will obey all your commands."

"It shall be done!"

"Daughter," said the friar, "I rejoice beyond all common measure that the church hath in you so zealous a supporter; and assuredly the love of all Christendom shall follow your exalted name. Yet all that thou hast undertaken is but a shadow of the great work to be accomplished. Thou hast laboured for the safety and honour of the crown; but in all this nothing is done for the church. But ten centuries shall not restore the church to the glory and power it possessed fifty years back, unless a bold and worthy devotion be now manifest in the sovereign. It needs not to say how the pious houses in this realm have been destroyed, the religious brethren and sisters scattered through the land, and the revenues

seized to unholy purposes. All this is well known; and truly, until, with the hearts of the people, the possessions of the church be restored, it shall be in vain to hope for the full establishment of religion."

"I would gladly lay down the crown of this realm to effect this great and good purpose!" cried the Queen, energetically. "Yea, I would put me in the place of the humblest of mine handmaidens so that I may do a work so grateful to the church, and so pleasing to God. But I dare not commence it, for fear of greater evils. Thou knowest, father, that I have kept back no farthing of the church's revenues to mine own uses, but have given back to the church all that the late king possessed, to the value of very many thousand pounds yearly."

"Yea, thou hast; and in that thou hast done justly: but justice alone deserveth no recompence; neither can man or woman shew gratitude by so simple a duty."

"But I have attempted more, father. I have urged my council, and I have declared in parliament that I wished to see the abbey lands restored, and the temporalities of the blessed church brought to the same state as they were in before the perversion of my father; but I found that I spoke to unwilling ears. I might perchance have applied force; but when my brother's death put me on the throne, I promised publicly in parliament, and by proclamation, and in private to my council, that these possessions, however acquired, should not be disturbed."

"Yes, daughter, thou didst so; but the sin of such a promise shall lie on the consciences of your enemies, and shall not touch yours. You were surrounded by rebels, who would have placed a heretic on the throne which was your lawful right, and every promise made to gain the possession of your rightful rule is without power to

bind you, and may be broken. Nay, even an oath voluntarily sworn, would be utterly void, because it was injurious to the church: it would be sinful to take the oath, but far more sinful to observe it; since the first would be only a sudden sin, from which you could be absolved after repentance; but the other would be habitual guilt, during which absolution could not be given, and you would be liable to excommunication."

"Dear father," cried the Queen, earnestly, "this crown which I struggled for so warmly will kill me at last. It was my just right, and the people stood by me, as well as mine own particular friends, when I asserted my claim. But I call God to witness, that I would have willingly given up my own claim, and left the burden of rule to others, but that I believed the church might receive some good at my hands. What a miserable fate then shall be mine, if I sacrifice myself for the church, and, after

embroiling myself with the people, see the true faith utterly extinguished in this realm. Such will be the event if you have rightly pronounced my duty. The nobles, as well as the gentry and common people, were quiet and obedient, throughout the changes of religion brought to pass in this realm by my father, my brother, and myself: the opposition of the people was but as a shadow. But now, father, you will touch their possessions, and well I know that when that is done there will be no longer peace. There is not a peer in the realm, nor a member of the council, nor hardly a gentleman or yeoman that hath not received part of this unholy spoil; and even those that were innocent of the great sacrilege, have bought and sold, and trafficked in these possessions; wherefore, father, if I attempt to restore to the church what she hath been deprived of, I shall make all the people hate me. Every man that hath a rood of this ground, will

join mine enemies; every member of the council, save the bishops, will desert me; and before I have secured a single field, I shall be an outcast from the land, or I shall be taken off by poison."

"Nay, daughter, thou magnifiest the danger of this holy work: thou forgettest that his grace the king would assist, and a few thousand of the faithful Spaniards would make short work."

"Friar," said the Queen, "thou art stepping beyond thy bounds; remember that I am the Queen of England."

"Your majesty will pardon the Christian zeal of her servant," cried the friar, falling on his knees before the Queen's couch.

"I pardon thee," she replied; "nay, I mean not to say I pardon, for I commend thy zeal; but remember this, that I am an Englishwoman, who hath not a foreign heart in her bosom. If thou and the whole church command me to bring in Spanish

soldiers to rule this realm, I might say that my dear lord hath none to spare from his own wars; and if he had, that I have no money with which to pay them: but I tell thee, that I have the spirit of my fathers, and that no foreign soldier shall ever set foot on these shores, but he shall first tread on my body. I will die for the church—I will execute the laws severely—I will enforce strict watch and punishment throughout the land; but never shall my brave people be subjected to the will of another. No, friar, never will I be such a traitor to my people as that. It hath always been the custom of England to send her sons over the world conquerors; they cannot endure the name of slaves; and how then shall they be enslaved, even in their own land? No! much as I desire the firm establishment of the true faith in this realm, it shall never be brought about by foreign soldiers. If I and my ministers cannot effect it, we

will perish in the attempt; but I will put myself at the head of an army of Englishmen, even if they be heretics, to drive from our shores the soldiers of any nation on earth who come against them. But this talk hath endured too long. It is past the hour of audience, and I must go to my chamber."

The friar bowed humbly, and left the closet, and the Queen rang a little silver bell, which was lying on the couch at her side, when two ladies entered, and assisted her to walk into the audience chamber.

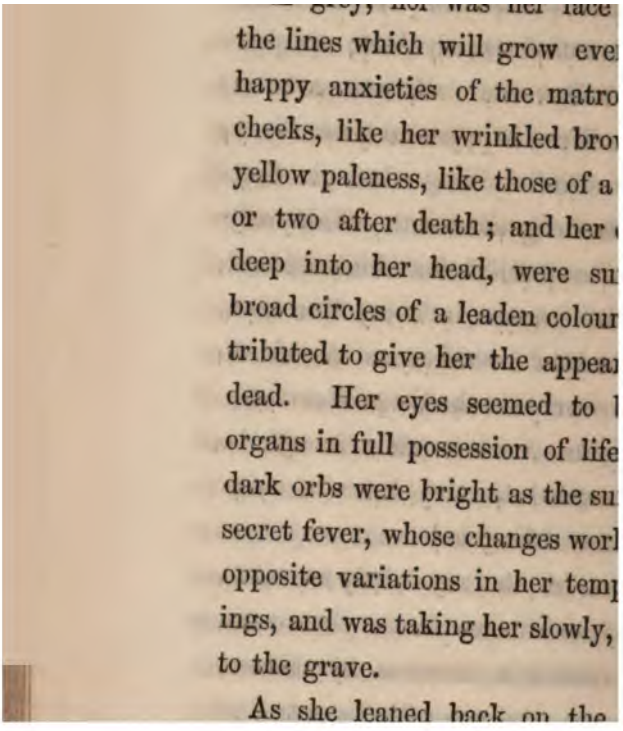
The Queen had scarcely seated herself on her state or throne when the gentleman in waiting announced the right reverend the Bishop of Durham, and the most reverend the Lord Cardinal Pole, and the two distinguished churchmen entered the room. That sumptuous room had often held a more brilliant assembly than that which now occupied it. Cardinal Wolsey, the mag-

nificent, surrounded by half-a dozen peers, almost wholly dependent on him, a score of noblemen's sons, who were being brought up in his house, and troops of state servants in gorgeous liveries, had often given audience to the great men of the realm, in the splendour and power of a monarch. Henry, too, had sat there, surrounded by the Percys, the Dudleys, and the Talbots, to receive ambassadors from all the nations of Christendom; and the young Edward, with the Cranmers, and Howards, and Seymours, had deliberated on the most momentous change that had ever been attempted in the nation. But perhaps any person who rightly comprehended the character and position of the present monarch would have discovered somewhat as interesting in this meeting as in the more glittering assemblies of former times.

The poor woman who sat on the throne had little of the brilliant exterior and the

buoyant spirit of her father, and less of the childish simplicity of her brother: her garments, of far less than regal magnificence, did not proclaim a person whose pride was in the elegant vanities of a court; and her countenance, sallow and dull, was as little indicative of a life of happy innocence. Very few persons, after walking through that room, would have again used the old saying, "As happy as a queen;" for if disease and disappointment printed in every line of a countenance might be taken as proofs of unhappiness, never was there a poor cottager on a village green, or a mechanic's wife in a city, who needed to envy her who occupied the throne of England.

The features of the royal lady were not disagreeable, nor was her face or form worn away to a miserable thinness by disease. On the contrary, she was rather stout; but while her cheeks had lost the clear white and red of youth, they had not gained the


grey; nor was her face
the lines which will grow eve
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cheeks, like her wrinkled bro
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or two after death; and her
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As she leaned back on the

would have willingly arrested, so doubtful was their expression, and so entirely without the gentleness and weakness which are the peculiar charms of woman. At the present time the heart of Queen Mary was more than commonly bitter. She was not only labouring under a chronical melancholy, but she was the victim of the most mortifying and grievous disappointment. While suffering from a dropsical disorder, she had fancied she was about to give a heir to the throne, and a son to her husband; and this delusion had gone so far, that thanks had been offered up all over the land for the blessing, and bishops in cathedrals, and priests in parish churches, had offered up formal prayers that the child might be endowed with the best qualities, physical and mental. After many months' expectation, at the moment when the realm was eagerly expecting the prince, the Queen had been disappointed in such a manner as to forbid any future expectation;

and this not only grieved her, and made her ridiculous in the eyes of the people, but dissolved the thin varnish of civility which hope had spread over her husband's natural brutality. It was now about a fortnight since this disappointment, and this was the first time the Queen entered the audience chamber.

But however important might be the personal qualities and the present circumstances of the Queen to the business of the persons who had now obtained an audience of her, they were utterly indifferent about them beyond the common tenderness which good hearts feel towards the unhappy: their positions and characters placed them beyond fear of what her diseased passions could do to themselves, and they sought her for a very momentous object, which they expected to accomplish by appealing to the feelings of the Queen rather than those of the woman. They approached, therefore, without trepi-

dation, the lady whose very name had blanched the cheeks of thousands of Britons, even of the bold and the warlike; or if there was a little hesitation in either, it was in the English bishop. Dr. Tonstall, though a dignified churchman, distinguished by literature, and illustrious for virtue and steady perseverance in the faith which he had embraced in youth, in spite of a somewhat extensive acquaintance with events in the eighty years of his life, had preserved with his natural honest simplicity a certain degree of awkward bashfulness. Perhaps the same peculiarity of his kind nature which had prevented him from being tainted with the persecuting spirit of the times in which he lived, had preserved his manners in their original rusticity. But besides this, a consciousness of his illegitimacy, which in those times of family pride and vituperative controversy had often been thrown in his teeth by persons at a loss for better arguments,

operated as a restraint even among persons infinitely inferior to himself in all the nobler qualities of manhood. But the Cardinal was a man of the world; his descent was not only pure, but the blood of English monarchs ran in his veins: for the last forty years he had mingled freely with the noblest names throughout Christendom, and more than once the highest rank, even that which was held to be superior to kings and emperors, was within his grasp, and was considered not more than worthy of him. The chamber which contained a monarch was a place familiar to him, and it was therefore with much greater ease and grace that he bowed his way to the throne than the aged and simple Dr. Tonstall could bring to that task, though in the essentials of goodness and scholarship, and sterling honesty, the homely Englishman was by no means his inferior.

When the two churchmen had kneeled at the feet of the Queen, and kissed her hand, and

again stood before her, she said in a pleasant voice, "We greet you kindly, fathers; but especially you, my lord of Durham, for my lord the Cardinal we behold daily; but you, methinks, have been somewhat slow in claiming our hospitality."

"I crave your majesty's pardon," the aged man replied. "Eighty years lies somewhat heavy on my shoulders; and now that your gracious majesty hath set me down in my old seat of Durham, I am not over hasty to move."

"Nor would I that you should, dear father," replied the Queen, "for well I know the sheep shall sorely miss so good a shepherd. Yet am I glad to see you once again, for your good name hath been familiar to mine ears from early childhood, and the same persecution and prosperity have attended our later years."

"Yea, your majesty hath wrongfully endured the troubles which only the priests of

so happy as to share the good
majesty, it hath been owing
jesty's piety, and my happines
tion of your own."

"Nay, reverend father," s
"you are more indebted to y
ness than our generosity; for t
but poorly serve holy churc
regardless of one that hath b
and so patient as you throug

"Your majesty maketh you
happy, for truly it is a crown
my life that so great and g
as your majesty honoureth
with commendations; and I
Durham very well content t

heavy matter that we would not grant to you, especially if, as I believe, you have journeyed so far to effect it."

"Yea, I have journeyed for none other end," said the Bishop, "and truly, less would not have wrought me to undertake the peril of so long a journeying. I did leave Durham on the fourth of this month; and as it is now the three-and-twentieth, I have accomplished the journey in a fortnight, which is a speed unusual, even to the most expert in horsemanship, to say nothing of the feebleness of my years. Many and great have been my perils from robbers on the high roads, and violent men in taverns, and the rough and flinty roads; and truly but for the chance meeting with mine old friend, Dr. Bonner, I had still been on the journey; for it was my misfortune to be thrown from my steed, which was sorely distressed from long travelling, a little before we met his lordship returning from his visitation."

"I am truly sorry that your good lordship hath undergone these perils," said the Queen, "and I trust that a messenger of your household should have been sufficient to assure you our instant compliance with your requests. Nevertheless, right glad am I that our palace may be honoured by your reverend presence for a time; and be assured that the King and myself shall be very glad to pleasure you."

"Happy is England and Christendom that so kind a monarch careth for Britain," cried the old Bishop, his face wet with his venerable tears; "but for mine own self I have nothing to crave beyond the prayer that your majesty may see an old age beyond even my years. But my petition is for the people, and for the true faith. My heart hath been sorely vexed, and my old eyes have wept many tears, to behold the sharp justice which is beginning to afflict the people. The poor subjects of this realm,

led astray by mistaken teachers, have forsaken the true faith; but, my gracious Queen," cried the old man, falling on his knees, "believe me, the people are not more blameable than the court and the church. The poor people have been misguided by mistaking kings, and time-serving priests and nobles, and they shall never be led in the way of truth by tortures and cruel death. No, no!—I have lived long—I was a parish priest before this heresy began, and I have seen the changes in many lands besides our England, and surely I never beheld that cruelty did assist the true faith."

"Cruelty! father!" said the Queen, "mine own days have not been so quiet that I should lightly inflict cruelty on one of my subjects."

"Your majesty will pardon the warmth of his good lordship," cried Cardinal Pole. "He is a mild man, that would not subject

an individual to a punishment that he thinketh useless; and if your majesty will hearken to him, he will doubtless say in what manner the corporal punishment of heretics toucheth his heart; and perchance his simple feelings shall find in your majesty's bosom a tenderness which shall acknowledge their truth."

"It is well," the Queen replied. "Say, Dr. Tonstall, what you desire."

"I have received the orders of your majesty's council, directed to the clergy and the churchwardens throughout England," said the Bishop, "and truly, if I had thought those orders would have been so strictly executed, I would have appeared in my place in the council-chamber, and raised my feeble voice against them; and if my poor labour had been in vain, I would have cast myself at your majesty's feet to crave mercy for your afflicted people. For truly, great Queen, it is a terrible thing that all bishops,

and parsons, and curates, and knights, and justices—yea, even constables, should be commanded to examine the lives of every man and woman in their neighbourhood, and commit all they choose to prison."

"Nay, my good lord," replied the Queen, "my lord Cardinal will assure you that only suspected criminals are to be committed."

"Yea, but this maketh all the gentry of England spies, and is utterly repugnant to the people. By this order, every man who beareth a private grudge against any honest person, is able to seize him, put him in gaol, and take his life; and even if by this means some few criminals be seized, it shall breed danger to treat them as your majesty's commission treateth them now. These suspected heretics are entreated more sharply than men taken in open and flagrant felony, such as murder, treason, and sorcery."

"Doth Dr. Tonstall lean towards heresy?"

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"There hath no man b
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said Cardinal Pole, "and
will not affirm those heresi
punishment."

"Far be it from me, m

consider that those heresies, and other such, have been openly and safely published throughout the land for the space of many years, nay, that they have been professed by kings, and bishops, and priests, and the great officers of the realm, you will see that it cannot be hoped all the poor people shall turn at once to the truth; and surely allowance should be made for the people until they have had time to be better taught; wherefore it is very sharp justice to give them up to the commission that slayeth them in their ignorance."

"You do not, surely," said Cardinal Pole, "except against the commission appointed in London, unless you deny the authority of the Pope? for I, in mine authority of legate, did appoint the commission."

"I fear," said the Queen, "that Dr. Tonstall hath somewhat departed from the faith by consorting with heretics."

"Nay, I affirm that your majesty, and

the Pope's holiness, have not a more faithful subject than I. I dispute not the right of the council to issue their orders, nor of your lordship to appoint the commission; but I am grieved at the horrible torture which is thus inflicted."

"Nay, good doctor," said the Queen, "you do not well to call it torture, as if punishment was lightly inflicted. The commission sitting at St. Mary Overies judgeth and punisheth by the known laws of England."

"Your majesty doubtless sayeth well," replied the Bishop, "but therein is the oppression more grievous. During the first years of your majesty's happy reign there was no commission of this kind, neither was any required, as the body of the people declared for the old faith; and I doubt not that, with a little patience towards the mistaken, and a little wholesome correction of the obstinate, your majesty should see,

before very many months, the nation wholly restored to the truth, as it was in the first years of your royal father. But though these persons are tried by the law, they were not seized by the law. No, they were seized by unlawful violence; and it was only for that the gaols were full to overflowing that the commission was appointed to try men, and clear the gaols for other prisoners. The persons were seized while there was no law against them; and they are tried by laws expressly re-enacted to condemn them: and this is an injustice hateful to every true English heart. I will say, in short, how these persons are treated: a man is seized on the information of a secret enemy; he is taken from his wife and family, and thrust into the common gaol along with murderers and robbers; there he is kept many months, often without examination; and behold, when the gaol is too full, the council causeth the parliament to pass laws

which will take away their lives. Is not this monstrous tyranny?"

The Bishop paused, and the Queen, apparently unprepared to reply, looked inquiringly at Cardinal Pole, who said—"I fear your majesty will find much truth in what my lord of Durham hath said. It doth appear to me that many people have been hardly treated. And if the commission have judged by the law of England, your majesty shall observe what parliament it was that made the law. Well nigh every man of them has supported heresy in the time of your majesty's royal brother and father; and now, at the first word of the council, they destroy all they had done in the last ten years, and re-enact all the laws against heretics which they had abolished, and even more than the council dare put in force; while they refuse to part with an acre of the abbey lands plundered from the church, though they lay under the papal

excommunication while they retained them. Your majesty will judge whether it be safe or Christian-like to execute severe laws obtained in such a manner."

"Alas, my faithful councillors," said the Queen, "I know not what to do to serve the church, and would to God ye would agree among yourselves what I had best do, for some urge me to sharp measures, and some other advise a milder course! Ye know well that my most inward desire is to see the people altogether restored to the true faith, and that I have no delight in the torture of my subjects. Wherefore my lord of Durham, you shall abide in our palace a day or two, until I gain more strength, when I will appoint a meeting of the council, and you and my lord Cardinal shall attend, and deliver your opinion."

Dr. Tonstall's countenance brightened at these words, which sounded like a half consent

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ing, a door was opened
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colours and elegant fash
could not give an air of
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countenance Providence
effaceable marks of cunn
cruelty. This person w

but his face was one of those that are little subject to the alterations of time, wearing in youth the art and coldness of old age, and being entirely without the simplicity and innocence on which the characters of time are generally written. Without being deformed, this person had every quality of the hideous. The sallow skin of his cheeks appeared not a covering for human blood, nor was it possible they could ever exhibit a blush; the long blank expanse of his face was not relieved by flowing locks, but was made more hideous by a scanty and ragged beard, and the hair of the head cut close to the skin; his eyes were small and unsteady, like those of a rat; his lips were thick; his forehead was wretchedly low, and his chin projected; the shape of his skull and the angle of his countenance were rather more bestial than those of a monkey. Having listened to the last words spoken by the Queen, he went away for a few seconds,

The person just described w
very imperious and superc
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his place by the Queen witho
any one.

This was Philip, King of
Naples, the dearly beloved hu
whose character would be non
in history if it had no deep
that of loving a man in ev
abominable. The persons w
the other end of the room a
very familiar with the place.
a thin, elderly man, with a sl

lowering, bushy brows, were full of fire, which could not be hidden; his hooked nose, small mouth, and lofty forehead, completed the picture of a man which the world might have loved to look on, if the expression of talent had not been equalled by that of wickedness. This person was Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and Chancellor of England: his companion, whose exterior was that of a well-dressed butcher, somewhat beyond the middle of life, was Dr. Bonner, Bishop of London.

It was evident that the King had given strict orders for the admission of these two learned doctors, since not only was an audience of this kind entirely private, and the present one composed of persons who were utterly hated by Gardiner and not much loved by Bonner, but, ever since her marriage, the Queen had given way to Spanish ceremony to such a degree, that no

person, whatever his rank or his business, could gain admission within the doors of any one of her palaces without first sending his name, and waiting for an order to attend.

At a motion of the King, the two bishops advanced to the foot of the throne, and stood by Tonstall and Pole, when the Queen, after a whisper from her husband, acquainted them with the subject in discussion.

"You are come at a happy time, my lords," said the Queen; "for we have been considering a matter that toucheth you as nearly as ourselves. My lord the Cardinal and Dr. Tonstall have remonstrated with us against the proceedings lately commenced against heretics; and before we determine what to do, it will be well to hear your opinions."

"On what grounds," asked Gardiner, "does the Cardinal remonstrate against the orders of the council?"

"I object," replied Cardinal Pole, "against the severity of the orders, and the cruelty with which they are executed."

"I trust," said Gardiner, "with a scarcely perceptible sneer, "your lordship hath laid before their majesties the claims which heretics have on our tenderness."

"Nay, brother Gardiner," replied Tonstall, "these vile people have assuredly no claims on us, for we heartily detest their wickedness; but we cannot forget that these persons are human beings, and Englishmen. I think this severity will do evil to the good cause, and stir up treason in the land, and I believe it is not needful to punish so sharply when the heretics be so few."

"It is matter of general knowledge," said Gardiner, "that his lordship the Cardinal hath a very strong compassion for this brood of Luther, but I knew not that Dr. Tonstall did so greatly abound with love for them that the church excommunicates."

"Especially," interposed Bonner, "as the rascal heretics did keep him in durance."

"Yea, I was in durance, surely," replied Dr. Tonstall, "but, considering that I was in the hands of mine enemy, I fared right well. I was rather a companion than a prisoner to the learned gentleman that had care of me, and saving that I was turned out of my bishopric, and beheld the nation fallen from the truth, I had nought to complain of. And well content could I be that the same measure that I received, should be meted out to these mistaken people—I could be glad that it were sufficient to take from them their offices, and leave their persons harmless."

"You shall do as you will, Dr. Tonstall," replied Bonner, "and for mine own part I will give them the measure I received; for I was thrust into a filthy prison, along with scurvy knaves, thieves, and malefactors, and hardly escaped with my life."

"My lord of Winchester," said Tonstall,

turning towards Gardiner, "you said not well that my lord the Cardinal's love for heretics was matter of general knowledge; for, believe me, there is not a bishop in England but might be somewhat abashed in looking on his lordship; for well I know there is not one that hath lived so unsuspected as he. For mine own part, I confess my sin in conforming to heretical innovations, and sure I am that you, too, sinned in like manner, while his lordship did never swerve."

"There is truth in what you say," replied Gardiner; "but methinks you forget one little circumstance. We remained in our own country, in the midst of a cruel persecution, and so far as we conformed it was a compelled obedience, like as when we give up our purse to a robber whose knife is at our throat. But his lordship was faithful when he might be so with safety; for it hath not yet come to my knowledge

that the priesthood in Italy have had to fight very manfully against heretic soldiery; and if we had cared so much more for our persons than for the church as to spend the last twenty-five years there, our faithfulness should bear comparison with even that of the most reverend Cardinal."

"There is a bitterness in the matter of your speech which I do not comprehend," said the Cardinal, with perfect affability; "you would have her majesty understand that I have shrunk from danger, and spared my person. I was, indeed, out of this kingdom while the persecution lasted; but I fled not, being out of England before; and I remained in obedience to the Pope's commands, who would secure me from certain death. But if I have not borne punishment in mine own flesh, I have borne it bitterly in my friends. The friends that I loved and honoured are gone—some, with my aged mother, murdered on the scaffold, and others by

poverty and loathsome imprisonment, and when I return to my dear England, I find it a land of strangers. There is something harder to bear in this racking of the heart than in the sharp, but short-enduring torture of the body. But this is beside our business. You said not rightly, my lord of Winchester, that there is a body of English people under excommunication. You know it is not many months since, by virtue of mine office under the most holy Pope Julius the Third, I gave absolution to this realm in presence of their Majesties and the Lords and Commons of parliament, on their request in humble repentance."

"Yea, my lord, you did absolve the nation; but I believe that absolution was only for those that repented and besought it—it doth not extend to those that utterly reject it; and therefore, my lord, there are people in this realm that even now are excommunicated."

"Be it so," replied the Cardinal. "I know not the hearts of all the people; but assuredly, in mine own conscience, I did absolve the whole realm with a firm belief that the people had turned again to the truth, and I seek not to destroy the bodies and souls of those few that may still be in error. I declare on my salvation, that I believe one-half of the heresy of this England hath been produced by false priests, who, taking the holy office on them, look more for the indulgence of their debauched inclinations or their worldly ambition than the progress of truth; and I trust that nothing is wanting towards the reformation of the people beyond filling the churches with holy and learned men who love God above all things."

"Such language would better suit Dr. Cranmer, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, than him that looketh to be the next," cried Gardiner, with kindling eyes, that shewed

he had been personally wounded by the Cardinal's speech.

"Nay, my lord," replied Cardinal Pole, "I look not to be Archbishop in England, and I heartily pray Dr. Cranmer may purge himself of his sins, and be found worthy to hold his high office. For mine own part, I have been so highly honoured by the church, that an archbishopric is not an object of ambition; and assuredly I find my present office occupy so much time, that I crave none other duty. But I trust, my lord of Winchester, that my language is not unfitting for a bishop or an archbishop, since it speaketh for mercy; and while God permitteth these men to live without a judgment falling on them, I see not that we can do better than imitate Him."

"God's judgment on them is shewn by their being delivered into the hands of the Queen's majesty, to be punished for their heresy."

"Beware, my lord, that you be not over-

hasty in concluding that to be God's judgment which is only a natural event in human affairs; for it oftentimes happeneth, that in indulging our cruelty, pride, or ambition, we esteem that we are obeying God."

During this conversation, which was carried on with secret anger and malice on the part of Gardiner, and with perfect good-nature by the Cardinal, the Queen had been engaged in a whispered conversation with her husband, who at this point moved with a slow and un-English tread to a window, where he stood looking out, apparently without noticing what was passing. Her Majesty then said—"This is a matter which requireth much consideration; and doubtless there is much to be said on both sides. We are inclined to the side of mercy, as it becometh us to be; neither should any drop of blood fall from a subject, even though a heretic, which we do not feel as though it came from our own heart."

As the Queen uttered these words of course, she thought of a letter which she had written to Bonner a week or two back, urging him to be more speedy with the heretics, and she involuntarily turned her eyes towards him. The zealous Bishop of London was staring at her in undisguised amazement, as though doubtful whether he were in a dream, or whether he had not been acting on a fictitious command. Gardiner listened with respectful scepticism, and Tonstall and the Cardinal with a thorough belief that the Queen was uttering the feelings of her own heart.

"Yea, my lords," the Queen continued, "we are on the side of mercy; but even mercy may be harmful to the state when it is not rightly directed, as when we spare great criminals who may pretend a licence for evil out of our pardon. In this case, my lords, before all things, the prosperity of the church is to be looked to, and, as we have done no-

thing without the advice of our council, it will not be well for us to be guided by our own tenderness in opposition to their grave judgment. Wherefore, my lords, we will appoint a meeting as suddenly as may be, when what you have to say shall be properly considered."

"Your majesty shall have the hearty prayers of an old man," said Tonstall; "and I doubt not to convince the council that mercy will best serve the church."

"I doubt not," replied Gardiner, "to shew that the time is come to prove that the church feareth not to strike down her enemies."

"For mine own part," said Bonner, "I see not how we can talk of heretics and mercy together. By'r Lady—I crave your majesty's pardon—it seemeth to me there is none here that hath cause to be merciful, for three of us have been deprived of our sees, and imprisoned, and the Cardinal hath been an exile through these wretches. Nay,

her majesty's gracious self hath been long persecuted, and is even now plotted against by them. I will not make or meddle out of mine own see, but please God I will look sharply after mine own while it is mine. Mercy! why I came here to lay before your majesty's grace another amazing proof of the obstinacy of these—these—schismatics. Your majesty shall know that even close by, not two miles from the walls of London, no farther than Islington, I found in my visitation a church set forth in the filthy style of the late reign—no altar, no rood, no statue of the blessed Mary, Bibles on the desks for people to read, Scripture painted on the walls, and what not."

"No farther than Islington!" cried his hearers, in wonder. "No farther than Islington," said Bonner, in great wrath. "See here the traitorous obstinacy of these people! All my orders, and their majesty's, and the council's, set at nought, and heresy preached

his answer in my court, he was take
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As Bonner said this, the Queen
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the first confusion was over, Tonstall

"Far be it from us to defend me
are guilty of such unlawful and treas
behaviour, for we would be the first to
them feel the power of the law."

"Yea, my lord," cried the Queen;
shall be made to feel it. Knowest tho
Bonner, the base wretch that was k

knave, but one of noble blood. Sir Thomas Granville is the man."

"Sir Thomas Granville!" exclaimed the Queen, in astonishment. "This is the first time I have heard aught against the knight. He hath been always esteemed a brave and faithful servant of the church. But this heresy is creeping even into high places, and weak measures will not avail. We will take care that this thing be inquired into; and you, Dr. Bonner, will use our power as you will, to maintain your authority."

"I thank your grace," replied Bonner; "there is none other way of safety. And by the Mother!—I crave your pardon—I will not suffer myself to be dealt with thus. Nay, I doubt not to prevail on Dr. Tonstall to think so, if he will accompany me to mine house; for, in spite of the resistance, we did seize one prisoner, whom we shall examine this day, and Dr. Tonstall will observe the wicked obstinacy of these people."

To this Bishop Tonstall immediately assented, and as the conversation had arrived at a point in which nothing remained to be said, the doctors bowed themselves out of the audience chamber of the sickly Queen and the supercilious King, Cardinal Pole riding away by himself towards Westminster, Gardiner towards London, and Bonner and Tonstall towards Fulham.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE records of persecutions for religion's sake are so full of heroism, and courage, and insolent daring, that Annot Palmer, the widow's daughter, may appear unworthy of the honour of priestly hatred, when I describe the homely patience of her spirit. It may be supposed that when she was seized by order of the bishop, she would denounce him in the fierceness of rage, in the bitterness of religious enthusiasm, or at least in the poetical phraseology of prophetical declamation; it may be supposed that

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in the first moments of her captivity were the most primitive of the heart; those of a human being in an unlooked-for danger—those of a home-keeping child taken away from the friends she loved, by the hands of strangers whom she had every reason to fear were very cruel. She was alarmed at finding herself on a horse before a man whose voice was not familiar—at being in a position where her hands were useless in ascertaining the locality—at leaving a mother who would so grievously suffer without her. She besought the man with an agony of tears to suffer her to return; she promised to abide any examination that might be necessary—nay, to accompany them at any future time, if she might be permitted to remain at home one day and prepare her mother for her departure. She was a frightened child, rather than an excited heroine.

If the natural instincts of men could be changed by observing the practices of all

men are capable of fear they will give
triumph to those that injure them.

That Annot besought the men in
was a matter of course: they at first lau
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daughter of a poor widow; she felt h
in an untried situation, wherein there
new duties to be performed; the na
hatred of persecution awoke in her min
resolution to oppose her persecutors:

conscience made her prepare her mind to endure trials and repel temptations, that she might not disgrace the faith which, as the work of God, was of more importance than considerations of ease and comfort, and all other worldly circumstances.

These resolutions and feelings became of the utmost necessity now; for Annot was beset, not only by rough serving-men and soldiers, who insulted the wretchedness of her situation, and the distresses of her heart, but by Bishop Bonner's learned doctors, who accompanied the party towards Fulham, and continually admonished the prisoner with a fervency and plainness that would have been considered abusive cruelty—nay, downright blasphemous indecency—if they had not been divines of well-known zeal. It was owing to their presence that her tears and prayers made no impression on the men. Not that clergymen were invariably less humane than laymen; but in

work renders it a kind of duty to
sensible to individual suffering, the c
and the life of opposers naturally b
dependent on the priesthood, who a
executors of it; and cruelty is put on
duty until habit renders it a pleasur
is not meant that these doctors encou
the serving-men in injuring or ins
their prisoner, or that they would hav
fered her to receive any bodily harm:
language was calculated only to ren
impossible for her to receive sym
The professional spirit of all orders of
makes them somewhat more dogmatica
their flocks; but the priesthood of an
lible church must be dogmatical in th

sidered her supposed heretical belief to be of the same evil nature as any violent crime voluntarily committed; and their exhortations to repent were of precisely the same kind as they would have employed to induce a person to cease from drunkenness, adultery, theft, or any other practice declared immoral by the common sense of all mankind.

This positive assumption of her guilt, which would entail on her a shameful death in this world and eternal misery in the next, effectually prevented her guard from feeling the least pity for the helplessness of the little creature they were leading to torture: it was also more offensive to Annot than actual brutality. Without possessing any scholastic knowledge, and but little of the more abstruse part of theology, her natural good sense discerned the illogical nature of their exhortations; so that to request as a favour, or command as a master, that a person should give up a

folly. But her situation was not the
embarrassing for its absurdity: her lif
in the hands of these men; and if sh
fused to obey their commands, she w
be held obstinate in her guilt; while, i
pointed out the absurdity of their con
she must appear to challenge a contro
with learned men who were too apt to
minate controversies by condemna
Neither of these results was at all plea
and Annot was very glad when she
released from further expostulation
arriving at the Bishop's house at Fulha

But there was some little hesitation
embarrassment among her conductors, w
they reached the court-yard of Fu
House as to what was to be done

secure her for the examination. The Bishop had not yet returned, and as the length of his stay in London was a matter of very great uncertainty, the girl must be put in some person's care to await his lordship's return, and none of the persons present were disposed to wish for the office. The two learned doctors, indeed, if all were true that was whispered, would not have been averse separately to take charge of a pretty girl, though she were blind and a heretic; for it was not generally supposed that celibacy had succeeded in eradicating their human passions. But the two doctors, though excellent good friends, and followers of the same patron, were naturally rivals, and neither of them would give his fellow the power to accuse or suspect him. They, therefore, went to their studies or some other pleasanter occupation, leaving Annot to the servants.

The feelings of these latter, if less politic,

were quite as natural as those of the doctors. They had travelled many miles on the previous day, and had not got to bed much before midnight—they had been up again very early this morning, and had done a pretty hard day's work, and now looked for a little relaxation—some of them wished to lie down for a few hours, some were for a hearty meal in the kitchen, and some for the village tavern, where they could relate all the particulars of their spirited crusade, and the morning's exhibition in Smithfield; and not one was willing to undertake so dull a task as that of keeping watch over a blind girl, until their lord returned to give them orders. Servants generally keep a very exact account of the labour they perform, and of their claims to relaxation.

It will be supposed that it would be very easy for the men to secure the girl in a room of the house, while they amused themselves; but therein was the difficulty. All the

rooms not occupied by the Bishop and his family, were already filled with prisoners; nay, his lordship had actually borrowed two or three rooms of some zealous friends in the neighbourhood, wherein to secure those that his own house would not hold; and all this after sending a draught of them daily to London, after his own private examination was over. The parish church had, at first, been the most convenient prison for these heretics, not only because it was so capacious, but because it would trouble the prisoners, by forcing them to behold the paraphernalia of the religion they detested: but it was now some time since the church had ceased to serve this purpose; for the last party of men confined there, being almost as zealous as Dr. Bonner himself, had destroyed everything which offended them—altar, candles, confessionals, paten, pix, rood, the statue of the blessed Mary, holy water—down to the very vestments of the

priest, which were locked up in his own sanctuary—all were involved in one promiscuous destruction. This event had closed the parish church against the Bishop, as the condition on which he might use it in future he refused, which was, that he should pay the churchwardens for all damage that might be done. At length, after a pretty long whispering together, it was decided that they knew not what to do: the question was therefore adjourned for a future debate, after they had looked to their horses, which were somewhat jaded from sharp riding, in the extreme heat of midsummer. One of the men then drew a rope from his pocket, with which he tied Annot's hands behind her back, and fastened the end of it to a post in the yard, which would effectually prevent every chance of escape. The men then went to the stables, and carefully rubbed their horses down, fed them well, and made them nice beds with fresh straw: did they

ever ask themselves whether the life of the poor girl were as precious as their horses—whether her position, tied up in the hot sun, were comfortable—whether she were in want of food? Alas, no; on the good condition of their horses depended the retention of their comfortable situations in the house; but self-interest was nowise concerned in the fate of that wretched blind heretic wench.

An hour had passed before the men returned to their prisoner; but Annot had not been alone all that time. There were women in the Bishop's establishment, and therefore there was no lack of curiosity: but as women were there, there was another better quality inseparable from their presence, and that was humanity. If the women who made the beds and helped the cooks were attracted to the court-yard by the unusual spectacle of a little girl tied to a post, when they had spoken to her, and

heard her gentle answers, they remained at her side much more from compassion than from curiosity. Shall this tenderness be imputed to the humble station of these poor serving maidens?—to the fact, that they were poor husbandmen's daughters and sisters, and therefore sympathized with the misfortunes of one of the same condition? Were they humane towards a poor man's daughter because they were children of poor honest men and women, and knew what it was to love little sisters at home? and was Dr. Bonner cruel because, being illegitimate, he had never known the charm of these holy bonds of nature? This latter supposition might appear to have some support from the fact that Gardiner, the politic, the learned, the polite, was indifferent to human torture, and was also illegitimate. But Tonstall, who in his best days was more learned, more experienced, and more zealous than either of them, was exqui-

sitely sensitive to every species of human torture; and yet he also was illegitimate. This fact deprives the other of weight, and leaves us at liberty to believe what is very pleasant to believe, that the poor kitchen-maidens were kind and gentle to a fellow-creature in distress only because they were women.

A peculiarity in Annot's manners, probably, had some effect on the maid-servants. Common prisoners would either have besought the men's compassion, or reviled them; they would at least have shewn some anxiety or curiosity as to their fate, and if they had not spoken to the men, they would have looked anxiously at the house which was to be their prison, and made an appeal to the women whom they beheld examining them. But this prisoner spoke not to the men, and looked not towards the house or the women: the talking within a few yards of her did not make her turn her face to-

wards the speakers; for as her eyes had always been useless, she had acquired the habit of turning her ear, and not her face, towards a sound that interested her, and thus she appeared to be so entirely lost in her misery as to be utterly unconscious of everything that passed around her.

There is something awful in profound misery—something which arrests the step and quickens the heart more than all the grandeur and pomp of prosperity and greatness. It is perhaps from the same cause as the interest with which we behold a horrible criminal in his cell; not mere curiosity or fear, but wonder in beholding a condition of human nature different from our own experience, passions which we find not in our own bosoms, or a position which we cannot imagine ourselves to be placed in. It was therefore with considerable hesitation that the women approached the prisoner and at a very safe distance from her

they contrived to look into her face, for no one is satisfied of a person's merit, until the face has been seen. But there was little need of all this ceremony, and so they thought when they beheld her countenance —a countenance not very sad, and not at all evil, but that of a pretty and innocent young maiden.

They soon gathered about the prisoner, and when they had thoroughly examined her exterior, and wondered that she did not look up at them, one of them said, "What ill-deed hast thou done, wench, that thou beest tied to a post like a dog?"

"I have done no ill-deed, willingly," said Annot.

"Then how camest thou there?"

"The Bishop sent me hither, and his man Giles tied me to this pole."

"For what, wench?—what hast done?"

"I am brought, as I suppose, to be ex-

these heretics!" cried one of the
"Well, by my halidom, if I did
they were all long-bearded, ugly
that it would be sin to shew them

"What is it you heretics do
another. "Do you strive to murder
Queen Mary, and call our holy fa
Pope, the naughty woman of Baby

"I do no such things," replied
with a smile—"I am not a hereti
know not how I have offended."

"See what a pretty smile th
hath," said one of the maids. "
would not look so if she were one
vile wretches."

"Why she is no bigger than
sister," said another. "To think

"Little girl," said a third, "if you were seized wrongfully, why did ye not slip your hands from yonder cords, which I see are not well fastened, and save yourself?"

"I know not the way home."

"Yea, but methinks any place in the open air is better than a prison. Ye might have gotten to London before nightfall; and your home cannot be much further, since our lord hath found you there since the morning."

"I have no money in my pocket," said Annot, "and I know not on which side London lieth; so that I should perish by the way, for I am blind."

"Blind!" cried all the women, in surprise and pity; and one of them went close to the prisoner, and putting her hand near her face, said, "Sure you be not so blind —not so very blind, that you would miss your way to London? You can see mine hand?"

"Nay, I cannot see it, surely," she replied. "If you hold your hand between me and the sun I could discern it; but I could not see it, for I have been blind from my birth."

"Holy Mother!" muttered the girl among themselves, "who ever heard the like! To bring a little girl like this, that is blind, to put her in prison as if she were some great monster of a fellow that had broken a house or robbed a church! Have ye no father, little wench, that would come with you, and see that no harm befalled you?"

"No, I have no father," Annot replied. "My father was murdered when I was a little child."

"Have you, then, no mother?"

"Yea, I have a mother who would doubtless, care for me, but—" and a tear stole over her face as she spoke—"my mother is bed-rid, and cannot stand."

"Have you, then, no brother or kinsman that careth for you?" they asked; and by this time they had all taken her kindly by the hand."

"No," Annot replied, "and no one that I love knoweth what hath befallen me."

"Never trust me, if I do not long to undo the cord and set the girl at liberty!" cried one.

"I would do it," said another, "if I thought no one saw us."

"What!" exclaimed another, "Dorothy is afraid to anger her sweetheart, Giles!"

"Nay, that am I not," cried Dorothy. "If that were all, by my maidenhood, the poor girl should be free; and if Giles said not I had done well, I care little if I never saw his face again. But how could we get the girl home, being, as she is, blind? But she shall not lie there in the hot sun. I will have the cord from her hand, and take her

into the kitchen, and give her some dinner." So saying, the girl loosened the knots of the cord, and slipped the prisoner's hands from it, and the maid-servants in a body escorted her into the kitchen. There they provided her with such luxuries in eating and drinking as were in their power, and pressed her to partake of them with as much eagerness as though she had been much more to them than a female in distress. Annot did not refuse their good will, for the poor creature had eaten nothing since five in the morning; and as it was now two hours after mid-day, hunger—the least accommodating of all persecutors—began to make itself felt even above the misery of imprisonment and the fear of death.

Annot was not long in taking the moderate quantity of food which the habit of poverty had made her satisfied with in a meal; but rapid as she was, she had hardly

done when the serving-men made their appearance in the kitchen in very considerable consternation from missing their prisoner. This, however, was over as soon as they looked round; and they would probably have revenged their fears on those who had caused them, if those had not happened to be women—and the women, too, on whom no inconsiderable portion of their worldly comforts depended. The presence of the prisoner put the men in their usual temper; and while they also took their share of the substantial viands on the kitchen table, and quaffed more than one bumper of ale, they consulted on the disposal of the prisoner.

The gentleness and helplessness of the poor girl, as shewn by her language, had so far affected the soft hearts of these kitchen women, that any one of them would have undertaken the charge of her; but the men, whatever their respect and regard for their

fellow-servants, who could materially affect the comforts and luxuries of their situation in the house, were rather more anxious about the good will of the Bishop, whose wrath was not slow in coming, and which at the first approach might dislodge them altogether from the house. The pleadings of the kitchen ladies were uttered in ears that were closed by an immovable principle of self-interest, and no mode of keeping the girl was to be thought of that did not take for granted a lock and key. At length after every room in the house had been considered, it was resolved that only one was at all eligible for the safe keeping and the safe being of the girl's person, and this was a little waste closet or recess near the back kitchen.

It was not inquired whether the place were comfortable or might be made fit for a person not convicted: its recommendations were, that it could be kept locked, and

that no person could escape from it without being visible to the household; and while the other rooms were crowded with prisoners of both sexes and for various offences, this room was occupied by only two men. The kitchen-maidens agreed to Annot's being consigned to this place, as the most favourable to the prisoner, for the reasons, that being so near them they should be able to talk to her and give her more food if she happened to be neglected by others, and that the prisoners already in the room were old men, with whom a poor maiden might be safe, which did not always happen even with persons imprisoned for the sake of religion.

The number of persons to be shut up in the same room was a very material thing to a prisoner in these hot days of imperfect ventilation, and Annot may be considered fortunate in sharing a room with only two persons, when many moderate-sized rooms

contained a score or two. But the g
fortune was only in word, for on being p
into her prison, she found that she co
touch the wall on either hand: it wa
fact only a little closet about a yard wi
without window or other air hole; the o
point which appeared to render it fit f
the habitation of men being, that it co
be very securely fastened on the outsi
That Annot was greatly terrified at bei
shut up with two strange men, in a narro
cell, needs not to be said; but her fear w
not of long duration. The perfect dark
ness was not troublesome to her: within
minute she had discovered that the ce
contained no kind of furniture but a litt
straw; that the men were fastened by ve
heavy chains to staples in the wall; and
what gave her a better security, that th
prisoners were the same that Dr. Bet
took by Islington Cross on the previo
evening, one of whom was a parson, an

Barnet, and the other the poor man Needham, to whom she had often given pence for reading the Bible to her.

Annot's reflections on her novel situation were not, for some time, disturbed by addresses from her companions to herself; but perhaps she was hardly quiet enough to make any reflections, as the two prisoners were engaged in very earnest controversy when she entered, and carried it on for a good half hour afterwards without coming nearer to an agreement or a cessation. It was not a controversy very likely to produce uniformity of opinion, since both persons brought a prejudiced mind to it. Master Barnard, the minister, formerly a Romish priest, had been for many years not only conscientiously attached to the Reformation, but, considering Luther an apostle of it, he had become attached to the man as he declared himself in his writings, and had grown quite as zealous in favour both of

the vagaries of his private habits and the mysteries of his belief, as of those eternal principles of reason which guided Luther's public conduct. But Needham, his companion, a mere vagabond husbandman, of no education beyond what he had gained by a constant perusal of the Bible, had little more faith in the man Luther than in any other man. He formed his ideas of Christian life by a rigid standard taken directly from Scripture—a standard which certainly would not have suited Luther, but which he himself rather applied as an example to his own conduct than in judging that of others.

In times of national disputations it is seldom that either truth or charity is found on the side of an educated party. The very studying of collateral doctrines and possible truths, as illustrations or enforcements of essential tenets, gives them a weight which they have not in their own nature; and at

length, instead of leaving these unimportant matters without discussion, to address themselves to men's common sense, learned men thrust aside essential doctrines to be perceived and maintained by peasants, determined that these disputed points shall be settled before any agreement is come to, by which means the discussion endures for ever, and is an unceasing spring of ill-will. This was pretty much the case between the two men now in chains: each certainly respected the other, and both maintained with equal firmness the principal doctrines of Christianity and of the Reformation; but that which the poor man had learned simply from reading the Bible, Barnard the learned man, as before hinted, had acquired from the works of Luther and other similar controversialists in the learned languages, and, through a somewhat fanatical spirit, he had received as matter of certainty a system of

divinity which, though it contained unquestioned truths, was not without many delusions and doubtful points peculiar to the temperament of the author. The subject of the present discussion was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in which the poor man held simply to the words of Scripture, while the learned man maintained the incomprehensible theory of Luther, and supported it by quotations from a dozen of the fathers; but the very simplicity of the poor man's mind, that made him confine himself to the words of Scripture, gave him a manifest advantage over the other, who, labouring among metaphysical mysteries, and fathers that never thoroughly agreed among themselves, lost not only his way but his temper. It was in consequence of a piece of Scripture quoted by his companion, somewhat difficult to reply to, and which made him impatient with an un-

learned opponent, who would not be readily convinced, that he noticed their new associate in captivity.

"Who art thou that art joined to us in these holy bonds?" cried Barnard, in an elevated voice. "Art thou one of the lambs of God's flock fallen into the den of the wolf, or one of his mighty soldiers in the hands of the enemy?"

"Neither of these can I call myself, good sir," replied Annot, in a modest voice—"I am a poor maiden, seized in my home by the Bishop for a thing I know not."

"But belongest thou to the accursed Babylonish woman, or art thou a member of King Edward's church?"

"I know not well, sir," she answered—"I am very ignorant of all things but the Bible; but what the Bible teacheth me I am very glad to believe."

"Thou doest right. Then thou frequentest not the mass?"

"I do not, sir. Others may be edified by the mass, but I comprehend it not. I love the Holy Bible; and I seek it before the mass, because it speaketh to me what I understand, and what will make me happy, if I obey it."

"Say you so, mistress?" cried Barnard, exultingly; "then truly thou art a vessel sanctified to the sacrifice; and right joyful shouldst thou be that thou art called to be a witness to the truth, through persecution and death."

"I am prepared to obey God," replied Annot; "and I pray that I may never murmur against whatever shall befall me. Yet am I not joyful, but sorrowful—very sorrowful! I would fain return to my mother, who will sorely miss me."

"Nay, woman!" cried the minister, "thou art no true servant of God, if thou wouldst turn back from danger for love of father or mother. He whom thou servest

will be father and mother to thee, if thou *trustest* in him only."

"Maiden," said the other man, "surely thy voice is not strange to my ears. Art thou not Annot Palmer?"

"Yea, it is surely me, Master Needham," replied Annot. "I would have spoken to you before, but that you were talking to this gentleman."

"And why wert thou brought here, Annot?" asked Needham, "for surely I beheld thee at thy mother's door no longer agone than yesternight?"

"Yea, I was taken away this morning—and I know not why. I knew you when you passed our house last night, and heartily grieved was I that you were a captive. I know not whom I have offended."

"What matters it who is offended?" cried Barnard. "The children of the truth shall be certainly persecuted. But, maiden though

you be, stand boldly by the truth, and laugh your oppressors to scorn."

"Nay, Master Barnard," said the other man, "I will not counsel the maiden thus. We that are men may well struggle against the tyranny and wickedness of men; but surely children may safely avoid this painful work. Wherefore, Annot, my child, be patient and gentle, and ye may escape. You cannot have made an enemy in your own village, and perchance you shall find that you are seized to bear witness against me, or because I have been known to read the Bible with you; wherefore, if you be first examined, and the Bishop would know whether we have read together, declare the truth at once, and return home."

"I would declare the truth willingly," said Annot; "nor will I ever fear to say I have read the Bible: but good Master Needham, I will never confess that or any

other thing, however harmless it be, if my confession shall bring another person into danger."

"You shall not bring me into danger," Needham replied. "What I have done, I have done. I will not deny it, nor can you do me a service by refusing to say what you know."

"May be," Annot replied, "you know better than I do; but I have resolved to answer for myself alone, if need be; and never will I say of another person what may give him trouble."

"Well, maiden," replied Needham, "I could wish you would look to your own escape from these trials, as I know that you shall be sorely missed at home. Yet you must do as you will, nor can I strive to persuade you to do other, as I am resolved also that my tongue shall utter no accusation against a friend of the faith."

The conversation now became of a some-

what more confidential nature, during which Annot learned that Barnard had been seized by Bonner, in Essex, in the course of the visitation undertaken at the express command of the sovereign. It appeared that this minister, a bold and uncompromising, and somewhat unmanageable enthusiast for the reformed discipline, had in no respect conformed to the new orders of the English church, but openly disobeyed all commands, and continued the public observance of the reformed ceremonies until his conduct forced itself on the notice of the ruling powers. Needham, quite as conscientious, but more careful, had kept his faith as quiet as possible, but had at length been informed against by a spy, as he had not the influence of station like Barnard to retain the good will of his neighbours.

Much conversation passed among the three Christian prisoners on their own circumstances, and the position of the true church

of believers in England—a subject very interesting to all of them, but not likely to have a satisfactory termination; for though, in common with every one that is convinced he hath the truth, they fully believed that their own opinions must finally prevail, there appeared but little prospect of it at present. While Mary was on the throne, it was not possible; even her virtues forbade it. Whatever faults she had, hypocrisy was not one of them; or at least, hypocrisy in religion was not to be imputed to her. She had, to be sure, in her distress, made admissions which were contrary to common sense and self-interest: in a struggle for the crown, she had made professions and promises which she certainly did not intend to carry into effect; but such conduct was not considered in any way to impeach her sincerity, since it was following the precedent set by every monarch of England whose title had been disputed. The alacrity with which she broke

all promises made against the interests of her notorious faith, was proof of her sincerity. She was known to be of a melancholy disposition, produced by the mean and cruel persecution which she had suffered through her miserable life. She was supposed to have become somewhat indifferent to human suffering; and when to these things it is added that she was married to a Spaniard, gloomy, and bigoted, and cruel, and was young enough to produce children who would be surrounded by Spanish friars, whose fanatical hard-heartedness was proverbial, the cause of the rational and liberal faith of the Gospel in England appeared in as unfavourable a situation as could be imagined. Very little of a comfortable nature, therefore, could be suggested by the prisoners: the faith which they were suffering for appeared to be in extremity in England, and the last resource was what the first ought to be, but seldom is—prayer.

Barnard, the minister, at the request of his companions, prayed earnestly for the church, for themselves, for their persecutors; though the prayer for the last was too much of an invective to gratify the tastes of his two very gentle companions. When he had made an end, and Annot arose from her knees—for she alone, as unchained, had the power to kneel—she openly wished that they had a Bible, that a portion of the Holy Word might be read.

Needham replied: "Annot, my child, methinks thou needest not wish for a Bible, for well I know that thou hast all the practical portions of Holy Scripture by heart."

"Yea, truly, master Needham," replied she, "thanks to you, I can repeat many books of Scripture, but I would know every line and word of it. Wherefore, I pray you, as I am aware how well you know it without a book, give us a portion of it now."

"It is well," cried Barnard; "it will

prepare us for the foe; but if you will, I will give you an exhortation."

Needham was silent, when Annot said, "I thank you, sir, and gladly would I hear it, and I hope yet to hear you in your own pulpit; yet at this present time, I would rather hear God's Word."

"So be it," said Barnard.

Then Needham recited several chapters of the Gospel, and many of the Psalms, and might have continued until midnight, but that after a time a serving-man opened the door, and bade Annot Palmer come forth and follow him.

This she did; and in the course of a few minutes she found herself in the presence of Dr. Bonner. His lordship did not proclaim himself by speech; but being somewhat weak and hungry, in consequence of his heavy labours during the last eight hours, he was indulging himself and supporting himself at the same time by a slice of meat and a

beaker of wine; and the somewhat noisy mode of eating and breathing peculiar to gentlemen of inordinate obesity, was sufficient to assure Annot as to the person in whose presence she was standing. Had Annot possessed the gift of sight she would have perceived that his lordship's silence proceeded not from indifference to her presence: his eyes glistened, and his whole face assumed a high expression of good humour when he beheld her, and every mouthful of his substantial slice appeared to acquire a more than ordinary degree of flavour by his keeping his eyes on her.

"Now, wench," said his lordship, with rather unpleasant jocularity, as he put up his knife, "you find me as good as my word: I said last night I would thoroughly examine your parish of Islington, and I have done it. So now, confess at once, and save me the trouble of proving you guilty, for I have a

house full of traitorous heretics that I would speedily dispatch."

"What would your lordship have me confess?" asked Annot.

"What! you are very ignorant of any offence, I trow," quoth his lordship, deridingly. "I warrant you know not why you are brought here."

"I know not why, surely," replied Annot.

"A very good and innocent wench, upon my soul, that sitteth at nights with knavish fellows in porches, and where not. Do you deny that you have read the Bible lately?"

"If your lordship remember," Annot replied, "I am blind, so that I cannot read."

"Yea, but thou canst hear it read."

"I thank God I can," she answered. "I have the blessing of hearing, nor could I employ it better than in listening to Holy Scripture."

"Ho-ho! you say so, do you?" cried the

Bishop, blowing furiously. "But dost not know that the reading of Scripture without permission is unlawful?"

"I knew not that there was any punishment for hearing," Annot replied.

"Thou art cunning, wench," said his lordship; "but thou art not the first cunning traitor that I have foiled. Thou sayest truly that there is no punishment for hearing, any more than for eating a capon: but if the capon be stolen, a man is then to be punished; and so thou, if thou procurest the law to be broken, shalt be punished. Tell me, then, when thou hast heard the Bible read."

"My lord," said Annot, "you will pardon me; but it seemeth to me that your lordship should know that already, as I am brought here to answer for it."

"Yea, I know it; but I will have thee say."

"I will answer to all laid to my charge,

but I shall scarcely utter an accusa
against mine own self."

"Well, well; say thou who hath read
Bible to thee."

"I cannot do so, surely," replied An
"I had come here willingly, if I had c
to accuse any one. But as I was brou
by force, I will rather look to save my
than bring others into danger."

"Thou sayest so, dost, thou naug
wench!" cried the Bishop, in open wr
"but thy tricks shall not serve thy t
Well do I know the course of thy wic
ness. What wilt thou say when I n
Needham?"

"I will say that I have always h
Master Needham to be a very honest
man."

"What wilt thou say when I tell the
shall be set face to face. Tremble,
stubborn heretic, when I tell thee this N
ham is in my hands."

"I am sorry for the poor man," said Annot, "but I do not tremble for myself. I have already met this Needham in my prison."

"Hast thou, by'r Mother!" roared the Bishop, furiously ringing a hand-bell on his table. In answer to this call, the Bishop's two learned doctors shortly came into the room, when he questioned them rather sharply on this breach of prison discipline; but, fortunately, no breach was occasioned in their friendship, as the doctors fully exonerated themselves, and smoothed his lordship's temper, by reminding him that they really had no room for dividing prisoners. A messenger was then despatched to another part of the house, to request the attendance of the Bishop of Durham, and when his lordship entered, the two bishops seated themselves at the table, near to which Annot was directed to stand, and the two

doctors, at a respectful distance, seated themselves with pen, ink, and paper, and a dozen folios of the Fathers before them.

"A right stubborn and cunning heretic we have here," whispered Bonner, to his right reverend brother. "I have been talking with her this half-an-hour, and not word of confession can I get from her. But I shall go roundly to work with her. Now then, thou girl, wilt thou say whether the man Needham and you have read the Bible together in Islington church?"

"Nay, if such be wrong, I cannot answer you against myself."

"Nay, but girl," said Tonstall; "we will take no advantage of thy confession. If thou hast erred, and dost repent, thou shalt be set at liberty."

Annot made no reply to this, when Bonner asked—"Is there a Bible set forth in Islington church? Tell us that?"

Annot still made no reply, when Bonner continued—"When didst thou last go to the holy mass, or wast confessed?"

As Annot still was silent, Tonstall said —"Girl—girl, thou art an obstinate one, I believe. Know you not that your bishop hath the power to question you of these things, and to enforce your answer? If thou dost regularly attend at thy parish church, why deny it? and if thou dost not, thou art a naughty girl, and must be punished."

"I do never miss the church on Sundays when my mother will suffer me to go," Annot replied.

"That is well," Tonstall said. "Why didst thou not say so before?"

"And it please your lordship," insinuated one of the doctors, pen in hand, "the girl saith she goeth to church, not to mass, or confession."

"True!" cried Bonner, "that is the

point. Say, then, girl, do you hear the common prayer, or the holy sacrament of the mass?"

Annot was again silent, until Bishop Tonstall commanded her to speak, when she said that Master Barker, the parson, was a kind friend to her and her mother, and she would not say anything that might do him harm.

"What is this Barker?" asked Tonstall; "the priest?"

"Wait awhile — wait awhile," cried Bonner, "you shall hear. This Barker should be the priest; but I doubt he is one of the ministers—minstrels would better name them."

"Nay," said Annot, "you do Master Barker wrong; he is a grave, and pious, and learned man, that is very good to the poor."

"Is this Barker, then, a false priest in your diocese?" asked Tonstall.

"You shall hear," replied Bonner. Then turning to the prisoner, he asked—"Doth he use the Mass-book or the Common-prayer?" The girl was silent, when Bonner said—"It needeth not the girl should say more on this. I have seen, with mine own eyes, that there is no altar in Islington church, so that the girl hath by her own confession attended church where mass was not observed, which amounteth to a confession."

"Yea," Tonstall replied, "it may be inferred that she supposeth to speak true of this Barker is to condemn him."

"There can be no doubt of it," said one of the doctors, "yet we may not lawfully take her words as an acknowledgment, since a person might have other reasons for refusing to answer, such as a promise, or an oath, or a fear of committing oneself. The girl's answer doth amount to semiplena probatio, and she may be put to torture to

make her confess the whole. But your lordships will have direct proof if you continue the examination."

"Well, then, girl," said Bonner, "you hear that we can lawfully compel you to answer; and if you would preserve a whole skin, you will answer shortly the questions asked. Art thou a member of the Catholic church?"

"Yea, I trust I am," replied Annot.

"'Tis well; speak up, and be not feared," said Tonstall.

"She is of the Catholic church, as she says," whispered one of the doctors, "but she doth not say she is of the church of Rome."

"Nay, there can be no more than one Catholic church," said Tonstall.

"Assuredly not, my lord," was the reply; "but these heretics do pretend our church not to be the Catholic, but the newfangled mummery of their own invention.

Your lordship will find this true if the girl be further questioned."

"What say you, girl, is this true?" asked Tonstall. "Are you, indeed, a member of the church of Rome?"

"I trust I am a member of the holy universal church founded by our Saviour."

"But is that the church of Rome?" cried Bonner. "Surely the girl is a fool to require all this asking!"

Annot was again silent, when Dr. Tonstall said, "I fear me, girl, thou art a naughty one, or why shouldest thou refuse to answer so plain questions? Thinkest thou we seek to harm thee? Far from it. If thou hadst given plain answers to us, thou mightest have gone thy ways before."

"But is it right," asked Annot, "that I should be brought away from home to be put to my answer on things that touch my life? Shall I be made to answer?—or ought not you to produce the proof, or let me go?"

There was something so reasonable in this, that Dr. Tonstall turned about to his brother bishop to make an observation to that effect; but at the same moment one of the doctors suggested that the prisoner was rightfully put to her answer, since she was taken on notorious and flagrant suspicion.

Then Dr. Tonstall said, "Thou art suspected, and art brought hither to purge thyself; and if thou art a member of our church, like all loyal Christians, thou hast but to declare it."

"My lord," Annot cried, "I have done wrong to no one, and know not why I am brought hither; but if I were the wickedest wretch, I ought not to be made mine own accuser."

"Yea, but thou art suspected, and art to be examined. And I not only suspect thee, but I suppose thou art a crafty wench, or why didst thou say thou wert of the church,

as I asked, while thou hadst a different meaning?"

"My lord," said Annot, "you speak kindly to me, and I would be willingly judged by you. I declare that every word I have spoken is true. I have answered you, taking your words in the way they are commonly understood; and would you have me give them a wrong sense, that I might perjure or condemn myself?"

The four churchmen here communed for a short space among themselves, after which Dr. Bonner said—"Well, girl, we pardon what hath been hitherto said, and now we come to questions right easily understood. Thou sayest thou art of the Catholic church. Dost thou believe that our holy father the Pope is head of the universal church here on earth?" The question was repeated, but Annot was silent. "What is thy opinion of the sacrament of the mass?" asked Bon-

ner; "is there a real or figurative presence?"

"I am a very poor and ignorant girl," said Annot; "I have a mother that has been bed-rid a many years, and her bread dependeth on the labour of my hands, who am blind, and cannot labour much; wherefore, my lords, my thoughts are chiefly on my work, and I understand little but what I hear out of holy Scripture. And how shall I utter an opinion on these great objects that divide the world, and are not held alike by learned men?"

"Blind!" cried Tonstall—"is yonder the girl we saw last night at Islington?"

"The same," replied Bonner.

Dr. Tonstall looked on the girl attentively a few moments, and a tear gathered in the corner of each eye. At length he said to Dr. Bonner—"It is a modest and well-seen girl, and one that will not do harm. I pray you, brother, let her go; I will be answer-

able for her that she shall attend you at any future need."

"Your good lordship failed to mark," said one of the doctors, "that while the girl refused to declare her opinion of the mass and the supremacy, she did profess her belief in Scripture. Wherefore, my lord, it doth appear that the girl believeth the doctrines of the church on those subjects be not warranted by Scripture."

"Is this so?" asked Tonstall, "dost thou hold this heretical opinion?"

After a pause, Annot asked—"What is an heretical opinion?"

"An opinion contrary to that of the church of Rome," one of the doctors replied.

"And what is the consequence of such opinion?"

"The heretic is cut off from the protection of the church, and is delivered to the secular power."

"That is, death!"

"Yea, unless repentance obtain pardon."

Annot paused awhile, and reflected; and at length said—"Ye are all old men, as I gather from your voices, and wise men, and ministers of God's word, that look to have the truth; but how are ye to be sure that I speak the truth of my mind, when I am to be pardoned for speaking one thing, and killed for speaking another thing?"

"Thou art mistaken, girl," said one of the doctors, "thy speaking now is neither to save nor condemn thee. What thou sayest, if well, is to be examined by the witnesses which are to be produced."

"Yea, is it so?" said Annot; "then am I right not to say aught before the witnesses are brought, that I may know of what I am accused."

"There!" cried Bonner; "there, Dr. Tonstall! I have suffered you to have your talk with this cunning harlot, and you witness how the crafty jade twisteth and turneth.

By my soul, nothing less than Smithfield will cure her. But to make an end of this, bid the men bring in Needham, and let us see whether we shall get an answer from him, for I have six companies to examine this day, and, at this rate, they shall employ us until Christmas."

Annot was ordered to sit down, and she did so, a man guarding her. The place where her seat was fixed was so contrived that she was not visible save to the persons examining her.

In obedience to the before-mentioned command, a man that kept the door went out for a few minutes; and shortly afterwards, Needham and Barnard were brought into the room, and took their places at the end of the table, after Barnard had made a vain attempt to seat himself at table with the doctors. Dr. Bonner would have ordered him to leave the room; but perceiving, as

he looked in his face, that he was quiet and grave, he said nothing to him.

"What art thou, Needham?" were the Bishop's first words, to which the reply was, —"I am an husbandman."

"A very worthy occupation," said the Bishop, with great complacency, "and sorry am I that a man such as you is brought to me to be questioned of his loyalty. Heartily glad shall I be if you answer truly the question I shall ask, and depart in peace."

The man said nothing, but looked in the Bishop's face with a half-credulous, half-doubtful air, which was not lost on the examiner.

"Canst thou read?" he asked, and the man said he could.

"Who taught thee to read?" asked the Bishop.

"I was taught in my youth, by a priest, mine uncle, with whom I was brought up."

"A priest—thine uncle, oh!" muttered the Bishop, interchanging faint smiles with his doctors.

"Thou canst read in the Bible?"

"Yea, my lord, I can, I thank God."

"Hast thou a Bible in the English language?"

"Nay, I am a very poor man," replied Needham—"I had never enough money to buy a Bible."

"Why, a printed Bible hath been sold for a few shillings. But how, then, dost thou read the Bible?"

"I had always my uncle's Bible to read in my youth, and since then I have looked into the books at church-doors."

"Thou hast been at Islington."

"Yea, I have."

"Thou hast read the Bible at Islington church?"

"Yea, I have."

"Lately?"

This question involved considerations of great importance, and the poor man paused awhile before he replied to it, but at length he said—

"Yes."

The two doctors exchanged smiles at receiving this reply, as it was an admission that there had been a Bible in public at Islington very lately, which was contrary to law; and although the fact was already known to them, it was desirable to have it proved by laymen, rather than by themselves.

"Knowest thou the parish priest of Islington?" asked Bonner.

"I do not," was the reply.

"Was it thy custom to read only for thyself, or didst thou read for others."

"It was lawful, a few years back, to read to people, so long as disputes were not created."

"Yea, man," said one of the doctors;

" but it is not now a question of law; that will be settled anon. You are to answer questions only concerning facts."

The man paused at first, but at length he said.

" I have read to others not so fortunate as myself in the ability to read,"

" To whom hast thou read?"

At this question the ears of the two doctors spread open to catch the sweet expected sounds of men denounced; their faces acquired a keener degreee of sharpness, and they dipped their pens furiously in the ink, like men preparing their swords for battle; but their expectations were not entirely gratified, as Needham declared both inability and unwillingness to mention any name. One of the doctors then spoke as follows:

" You cannot be permitted to deny to their lordships the names of the persons to whom you have read, since you said awhile

back, it was lawful years agone to read the Bible to people, whereby you admitted it was unlawful now: it is just to suppose, therefore, that you would not knowingly break the law, if you knew not the party along with you, that were to aid and comfort you in it. If you do not answer to the question, therefore, a refusal must be marked against you."

"That may be your law," said Needham; "but if I have been drawn on to say too much, I will not be drawn on to confess more than mine own deeds."

"Contumacy direct," murmured one of the doctors; but the Bishop of Durham said aloud,

"I know not why thou fearest to utter all the truth, my good man. Surely no one here seeketh to do thee harm, and thy over-cautiousness will only hurt thyself. This realm of England is governed by laws which every man may learn, and these laws

must be obeyed by the people, or enforced by those to whom it belongs to enforce them. If, therefore, thou hast offended against the law, thou art to explain it by a clear confession, unless thou seekest punishment by offending obstinately and maliciously."

"His lordship hath declared the custom of law," said one of the doctors; "the question is, Needham, to whom hast thou lately read the Bible?"

"Being brought here against mine own will," replied Needham, "I know not how I may reply with safety. But even if I were to bring fifty men into danger by my confessions, mine own safety is not assured, wherefore it would shew little knowledge and more folly in me to make accusations which perchance I might have to prove."

"I understand not all this doubt and caution," cried Dr. Tonstall; "for mine own part, I desire only to know in what degree

thou hast obeyed the laws which the bishops of this realm have thought fit to institute."

"That thou wilt never learn, brother Tonstall," cried Bonner; then turning to the prisoner, he cried—"Know you the girl Annot Palmer?"

"I do know the girl," he replied.

"Hast thou read the Bible to her lately?"

This question was repeated, but the prisoner was silent; at length Dr. Bonner cried—

"Bring forth Annot Palmer!" and Annot was led from her place of concealment, and put at the side of Needham. "Now then, let us have the truth from one of you, before we send you to London, and draw it from you by torture. Let us know whether you two have lately accompanied one another in reading the Bible; and remember, that for the first who confesseth we will do our best to procure a pardon."

To this munificent promise of the energetic Bishop neither of the parties made a suitable reply, Needham remarking, "We shall gain little by agreeing to that; nor is it likely we shall cast ourselves on your mercy before we know what proof you already have."

"Thou talkest like a man of small understanding," said one of the doctors, "or thou wouldest know, that if thou force their lordships to bring their proofs against thee, there would be little merit in thy confession, and that thou wouldest be the subject of justice, not of mercy."

"Yea, sir," said Needham, "but it would hardly be wise for me to throw myself on your mercy before I know what claim your justice hath on me."

"Tut, tut!" said the Bishop of Durham; "this is child's play, and no examination of suspected ill-doers. Is it not manifest that a bishop hath power to look into the faith

of all the people in his diocese? If ye deny that, ye must be sent to prison, and dealt with as stubborn heretics or traitors; but if ye think the Bishop hath such right, ye must answer, and not make a mock of the court. Say then, thou, Needham, or thou, Annot Palmer, the truth of this matter, with the assurance that even if ye have done wrong ye shall be pardoned on repentance."

"I will say all that I have done," Annot replied; "but I dare not speak of what other people have done, lest I bring them to punishment for that which I may believe not wrong."

"And I too may justly, and will steadfastly utter mine own opinion," cried Needham, "and make confession of mine own deeds; but I will not be an accuser. There is some difference, I trow, between a confession and an accusation."

"What is all this idle shilly-shally!" ex-

claimed Barnard, stepping to the table, and smiting it fiercely with his hand. "Why all this niceness of conscience, and splitting of hairs! Friends, ye who hate the iniquity of that filthy woman that displayeth her hideous obscenity on the seven hills of Rome, why crouch ye before these wretched instruments of her guilt? Up and tell them at once that ye have read the Bible together, as I know ye have, and lately too, and in Islington church; and which of these pampered minions of the Romish Jezebel dare declare it wrong!"

This somewhat forcible address took the band of examiners by surprise, as they were by no means accustomed to plain speaking, save on their own side. The four divines communed awhile among themselves, and at length Tonstall, addressing Barnard, asked,

"Who are you, man?"

"And who art thou?" was the contemptuous reply.

"I am Cuthbert Tonstall, Bishop of Durham," said the Bishop, calmly.

"And I am John Barnard, parson of Wilhurst, in Essex," said Barnard; "but I fancied there was no such see as Durham."

"Yea, but there is," said one of the doctors; "the Queen's majesty hath restored that see to the church. But you are here to be examined, not to examine; wherefore, instead of talking about sees, thou must explain the blasphemous language thou hast uttered."

"Blasphemous! sayest thou? Why blasphemy is a crime against God, and surely the man that is called Pope, (I would he had a rope,) he is no God!"

"Barnard," said Tonstall, mildly, "beware of the harm thou doest thyself. Knowest thou not that thy words are all written down, and will be produced against thee."

"I utter no word that I will not justify," replied Barnard, fearlessly.

"Thou hast spoken foolishly," cried one of the doctors; "the sin of blasphemy is indeed a sin against God, in its original signification; but if thou art a priest, thou knowest that, to speak ill of the church is blasphemy against God; since unto the church God hath delegated his power on earth."

"I a priest!" cried Barnard; "I one of that painted and bedizened crew, that troubleth the saints! God forbid! better would it be that a millstone were put around my neck, and I were cast in the sea."

"But thou wast a priest formerly, wast thou not?" asked Tonstall.

"If I was one of that crew of ignorant ill-doers," cried Barnard, "it was in the days of my darkness, and heartily glad am I that I see the error of that way."

"Methinks, then," replied Tonstall, very mildly, "you should have learned charity. If you did formerly believe the faith we

hold, you should not use this ill-mannered language to those who have not seen fit to change as you have. Besides, our offices in the nation and the church should secure to us civility at the least."

"Civility to ye! civility to such as ye!" cried Barnard, with great contempt, "and what call ye yourselves—bishops? Bishops, I warrant me, of the devil's school."

"Man, man!" cried Tonstall, "I prithee forbear, even for thine own sake forbear to apply such language to any persons that are appointed by the sovereign, and who do but fulfil their trust. Wouldest thou be proceeded against as a traitor?"

To this Barnard was about to make a very sharp reply, when he was stopped by Needham, who, turning towards him said, "Master Barnard, I marvel that you, a minister of the gospel, use this ill-language. You sorely forget yourself, especially as this is not an examination of yourself, but

of two persons as faithful as you, but who utterly dislike such unseemly talk."

"And ye will crouch before these murderers, will you? Well, do as you list, I will not meddle more. Lie down, if ye will, and lick the claws of the dragons that be red with the blood of saints."

"Thou ruffianly knave!" thundered Bonner, rising from his chair,—but he was stopped by even a louder voice from Barnard's lips—

"And who art thou?" he cried—"who art thou, Edmund Bonner, that callest men ruffians and knaves? Is there in Christendom such a monstrous ruffian and knave as thou?"

Bonner whispered to one of his doctors, who immediately left the room; and then turning to Barnard, he said, bitterly, "I see nothing short of Smithfield will suit thee. Thou shalt speak an thou wilt when

thou art at thy stake; but I will soon have thy tongue chained here."

"Yea, thou mayest chain my tongue, as thou hast chained and burned, and will chain and burn many better men, if thou beest not stricken dead by God's terrible judgment; but thou canst not chain the tongues of the people, and they will rise against thee and pursue thee until thou findest refuge in the arms of thy accursed father, the Pope."

"Surely the man is mad, my good lord?" whispered Tonstall, when Barnard, catching the words, cried, "Ye are liars, both of you. But I speak not so much to you, Tonstall, that calleth thyself Bishop of Durham, for I know little harm of you, save that you follow the idolatry of Rome. But thou, Edmund Bonner, why sufferest thou that they call thee 'Lord?' Thou art no lord, but a poor paltry bastard. Thou

a bishop! Never canst thou be Bishop of London until thou hast torn out the heart of that holy man Ridley, whom thou hast mewed up, and art about to destroy, to whom thou art not worthy to be a slave."

Bonner now rushed towards Barnard, and would have seized him, but that he placed himself in a position to repel violence; and while the Bishop foamed at the mouth with rage, the other continued—"Thou evil man, thinkest thou I fear thee! Touch me, and I will dash thee to the ground, and trample on thee. Thou a bishop! Rememberest thou not that when Edward, for thy many manifest treacheries, debaucheries, and treasons, put thee in prison, Ridley, the worthy man, did take thy mother, harlot though she were in thy begetting, and sate her at his own table, and minded that she wanted for nothing? And thou ——"

"Foul-mouthed cur and liar!" shouted

Bonner; "by God, I will burn thy stinking carcase before the week be over!"

"Burn! sayest thou!—when thou list, and I will spit on thee then as I do now! Yea, Bonner, Bishop Ridley the good, the learned, he did feed thy unchaste mother at his own table, and he did use his interest to make thy prison easy, and thou lustest hotly and fiercely for his most righteous blood. Oh, would to God that my wishes had been heard, and thy abominable carcase should not now poison the world; for I would have burned thee, or hanged thee like a murderer and double traitor as thou art, and so should the earth not have been troubled with thy detestable cruelty."

How much longer Barnard might have denounced his diocesan cannot be known, as, when he had uttered the words last mentioned, his arms were seized by men behind him, and he was in an instant lying on his

back, with cords around him. He would have continued to speak even now, but no sooner did he open his mouth, than an instrument was clapped into it, which effectually prevented articulate sounds.

This little instrument perhaps might not have been altogether useless, if occasionally applied to the right reverend owner himself. Even at the present time it might have been serviceable, for no sooner did he behold his adversary bound than he repaid with liberal interest the abundant vituperation he had received, and was only kept from striking him by the brawny arms of his doctors, and the persuasions of Dr. Tonstall, who thoroughly believed he had been listening to the ravings of a madman. Perhaps even then Dr. Bonner might not have been prevailed on to delay his revenge, but that he was not insensible to the advantage his cause would derive from being supported by the venerable Bishop of Durham, who was

known to be averse from acts of violence. This consideration, and the necessity of examining other parties, prevailed on him to leave Barnard untouched for the present, and that zealous, though somewhat imprudent and irascible minister was led away to prison. But it was rather a harder matter for the Bishop to give up his wrath than his vengeance; and his lordship, perspiring at every pore, and breathless with rage, though he sat down in the judgment-seat, could not keep down the curses that every moment thronged up from his swelling heart—or stomach.

There was little justice to be expected now from the Bishop, which would have been a misfortune, if the prisoners had not known that this was a very ordinary occurrence; but the presence of Dr. Tonstall, if it procured them not justice, saved them from immediate ill-usage. His lordship was the first to speak.

"Prisoners," he said, "ye shall sustain no injury from what yonder madman hath uttered, which, but for his infirmity, would have rendered him liable to the heaviest punishment; since to question the authority of bishops is, at the very least, to question the authority of the monarch. Wherefore you will speedily make answer to what hath been asked."

"You," said one of the doctors, "or one of you, are to say when you have read the Bible together in Islington church."

"To that ye have had mine answer," said Needham.

"And mine," said Annot.

"By God's Mother, here is too much of this!" cried Bonner. "I did bring ye here that ye might be examined privately, and if ye could prove yourselves innocent, I might dismiss you quietly, and no harm done; but, by Saint Peter, ye are traitors in the uttermost degree in refusing to answer our ques-

tions; wherefore ye shall wend along wit yonder ruffian to Paul's church, in Londo to-morrow morning, where ye will be out mine hands; and God have mercy on ye ye abide not questioning. If ye have a regard for your skin or your joints, ye w make up your minds to speak; for, by t blessed Mary, if there be knowledge with you, it will be plucked forth. And yo thou naughty wench and obstinate, if th be as I suspect, the paramour of this priest, Barker, I will make thee smart by the morrow; for I will have him on the rack, where thou shalt hear him. Take them hence!"

The prisoners were then conveyed to their dungeon, and a fresh company was at the same moment brought into the Bishop's court.

CHAPTER IX.

Now turn we to scenes of joy. Strange that there should be joy to describe in a world that contains such wickedness and misery as have been here described. But it is the strangeness of life; and, however gloomy the subject, the picture is not complete that has no light. Human life is terrible or beautiful, according to the point at which we look on it; but the most horrible scene is not all horror, as the fairest is not all fair; a partial glimpse may be all brightness or blackness, but he whose vision can

grasp the whole, and is not prepossessed in favour of any part, will discern a fabric wherein light and shadow are pretty evenly mingled.

The palace and the prison are two most opposite scenes. He that pines away in the dampness and gloom of a narrow cell would describe life as a most miserable scene—he would hardly admire the festivities within a few yards of him—he would not suffer them to enter into his calculations of the beauty of life. He that luxuriates in the splendour of a palace would paint it with the brightest colours; the very shadows he would employ would be bright; he would not think of the wretch in the dungeon, whose misery ought to be balanced against his own pleasures in an estimate of life. Yet, this prison and this palace might be side by side; the prison might indeed be part of the palace, while the habits and the experience of one should never interfere with those of the other.

A man is led from his home to be cast

into a debtor's prison at the very hour that his near neighbour is rejoicing over an accession of wealth; the parents that are binding the miserable grave-clothes around their only child, are parted by a slight partition from other parents who are arraying their youngest cherub in robes of the sweetest fancy for its baptism; and not one of these intermeddleth with the other.

At the very hour that Annot Palmer was under the examination of Bishop Bonner—at the very hour that her fellow prisoners were lying in fetters in their unlighted dungeons, and some of them undergoing direct corporal punishment, Finsbury-fields were spread with tents full of gay citizens, the Thames was alive with crowded boats, almost every house in London was hung with garlands—yea, nearly every village in the realm was as gay as though there were no misery within the boundaries of England.

The gaieties of Clawton Hall, spoken of in the morning by Mistress Anne Granville,

did not fail. Before the young lady reached her home, the park was thronged with dependents and friends of the house, separated into groups amusing themselves in the sports they loved best. Her heart bounded with pleasure and pride as she looked on the house and the park that had been the home of her ancestors through many ages. It was such a scene as might render the consciousness of high birth and ancient rank a pleasure fit for an innocent and humble heart—a pleasure in which there was no weakness, a pride in which there was no arrogance. It was a precious thing for one that loved the happiness other people enjoyed, to behold some hundreds of men, women, and children—yea, very old men and women, and very young children, who had thrown aside the common occupations and business of their lives, to assemble under the shadow of her paternal castle as the place for a more than common happiness. The throngs of active villagers in holiday garb, the wide-spread laughter, the busy hubbub of cheerful voices

before the hall, were a more delightful testimony of the young lady's power and station than purple and fine linen, than golden cups, than armorial bearings, or stately processions through courts.

The old manor-house of Clawton was precisely the edifice around which old British sports should be celebrated. It had nothing in common with the two most prevalent styles of domestic architecture of the day: for it was neither a flat building containing a vast number of low rooms, nor an irregular series of pretty bits, representing various portions of old castles, which were the most common styles for gentlemen's houses. Clawton Hall had been a castle several centuries back, and the perfect outline, as well as the interior arrangement, of a castle were there still. Outer walls had been removed, ditches had been filled up, mounds had been levelled, and comfortable windows had been let into the huge depths of the castle walls: the castle had been gradually transmuted into a dwelling-house to suit the times, and in obe-

dience to the laws, but the Granvilles would no more have thought of defacing or altering the character of the house where they had so long lived in honour, than of cutting down timber in the avenue which reached half-way to London, and every tree of which had been there more than four centuries. Anne might have fancied that time had gone back two hundred years; and that her father was like one of those old knights whose portraits hung in the great hall, the lord of a dozen manors, every man on which was dependent solely on him, and was bound to appear at the hall-door, and follow his lord wheresoever he might lead, at the first ringing of the bell in the alarm tower, which now rang on no more serious occasions than dinner.

The castle was there, and the men; nor had the wealth of the family diminished, nor their power sunk more than that of other families; but gunpowder and books had given order and government to the nation, and the feudal system had made way for the beginning of a more enlightened one, in

which the lower class was elevated into the possession of legal rights and constitutional liberty; the upper class was depressed and curbed, and, from the tyrants of a little circle, and the disturbers of the general peace, rendered the firmest supporters of the monarchy and the patrons of the poor; while the Sovereign himself was made to feel that his will was not all in all, but that the obedience of the people had its conditions, and that his rule was subject to laws.

Yes, the castle and the men were still there; the castle perhaps not less commanding, now that it was termed a hall, and the people not the less respectful because they were not compelled to obey. But those old walls were no longer guarded by bowmen patrolling along the battlements; the men were no longer clad in complete steel, armed with flashing sword and shield, and gathered orderly around their banners. It might be expected that the want of these martial and spirit-stirring embellishments to the scene

would strike the young lady's heart with regret, as she has been described as rather proud of her family, and not without a certain degree of haughtiness of spirit which would better suit a more warlike age than the present. But whatever might have been the thoughts and spirits of Mistress Anne in heroic times, she was blessed with a feminine heart that was well adapted to find enjoyment in the quiet scenes of a more domestic life. If her high spirit could have armed a brother or a husband for the field, she could also enjoy the better pleasure of seeing them comfortable at home; and she could acknowledge how much pleasanter than men thronging to the hall to be led to battle, was the gathering together of old and young, women as well as men, to spend a holiday in innocent national amusements, without guard, watch, or other security from a foe, because happily the vales of old England could no longer be trodden by men sufficiently powerful to despise the law.

No circumstances of human life could be

better adapted to create happiness than Anne Granville's at this moment; and she was very happy. Yet was it rather the happiness of delightful anticipation than of present enjoyment; for all that she beheld, felt, and thought, was as nothing to the joy of the afternoon, when all her dearest friends were to be about her. These pleasant anticipations could not be long enjoyed; for it was now on the point of noon, and the lady went into her chamber to array herself for dinner: yet more than once, while passing along the avenue, she turned back her blushing face as she heard a horse or deer bounding across the park. It is to be supposed that she expected some of her female visitors were close at hand; and yet why that blush, since she could have done no more, if she had even looked so inquiringly, as is not very probable, for Master Harry Markham, who was coming from Waltham.

When, after half an hour's retirement, the lady came from her chamber, she might

have glorified the court of the greatest monarch in Christendom, so magnificent were her robes and her beauty. That profusion of precious stones worked into every tissue about her, from her hair to her shoes, would have appeared a vanity and folly in one less young, less beautiful, less nobly born and connected; but to her, the blaze of her adornments seemed proper and just, from the splendour of her position; though, indeed, the utmost decoration would have seemed humble and modest in her, so entirely did the charms of her person throw into insignificance the pomp of riches. As her noble figure moved into the reception room she would have appeared to her assembled friends a vision of beauty more than mortal, but that over her neck and face arose the crimson evidence of bashfulness, peculiar, at least in loveliness, to the sweeter part of human nature. It was a creature to be loved as well as worshipped—one not too good or too great for every-day domestic love—not drawn up above com-

mon wants, desires, and sympathies by the chilling consciousness of beauties which all must admire, or a greatness which endures no control; but full of passions,—gentle, and weak, and womanly, like a maiden of the humblest order, her greatest merit being a heart whose natural simplicity had not been spoiled by adulation or luxury, and which was therefore kind, and faithful, and generous.

Yet why, modest as she might be, did she blush to meet her friends and kinsmen, come to celebrate her birth-day? Her father, that looked so proud of her, her uncles, aunts, and cousins that were so fond of her, surely need not create a blush, be she never so bashful. But if all the truth must be told, that blush had arisen to her face before she left her room, and she was not conscious that it still coloured her cheeks and bosom; but it had nothing whatever to do with her kinsmen or kinswomen. She had been sitting at the latticed window, looking out on the park, and admiring the fine old trees which threw such

delicious cool shadows along the avenue, when a horseman rode down towards the Hall, who was neither father, uncle, nor cousin; and as he came nigh the house, he turned his eyes towards the very window which belonged to the young lady, and therefore she blushed. She did not suppose, of course, that their glances had met—that she had been seen—oh, no! her confusion was probably anger that any man should presume to look towards her chamber; yet of all the ladies and gentlemen in the reception-room, the only one not of her kindred was Master Harry Markham, and when he respectfully approached to give the common salutation, she did not refuse her cheek to the light pressure of his lips.

As soon as the congratulations peculiar to the occasion had been paid both to father and daughter, the whole of the company went out into the park to give their countenance to the amusements which were sure to be a principal ingredient in their pleasure. The full view of the day's sports

gained by the family party was somewhat more interesting than even that which had arrested Anne's steps some time back. She had seen but a glimpse of it from the avenue, but now she was in the midst of it. The part of the park on which the company entered was a lawn, before the most private end of the house, which might be considered the state front, and had been, during three or four generations—in fact, ever since the general use of fire-arms—used by the Granvilles for the practice of archery, out of a desire that the old English weapon should not be forgotten; and as by uninterruptedly keeping up the practice from the time when the nation was so famed for skill, the length of a shot had been very little curtailed, it will be supposed that the piece of ground which would allow a fair shot in every direction must be of very considerable dimensions.

This lawn was divided among twenty groups of men, women, and children, some of the former engaged in shooting with

both the long and the cross bow, at the "buttes and the prickes," the former a kind of target, the latter an artificial bird, three hundred yards from the marksmen, set on a pole with a spring that moved the bird at the lightest touch of the arrow. Besides these, there was a mark set up for youths at two hundred yards distance, and this was a rather busier scene than the other, and the shooting, for the distance, nearly as good, since the combatants were nearly twenty years of age, and shot by themselves because only professed archers ventured to shoot at the mark for men. Other parties were engaged in the less scientific game of quoits; others, whose talents lay rather in swiftness of foot than in sharpness of eye and delicacy of hand, were flying through the lawn in the game of prison base; while along the edges of the lawn parties were ranged at tennis, bowls, and kayles, and other games that required a long and narrow slip of ground. Within the space so enclosed, besides the sports

already mentioned, were the throwing of the sledge hammer, the ponderous rock and the axle-tree, among the men; while the younger male branches of the assembled families were as busily employed in wrestling, trap-ball, foot-races, and games of the like sort in which agility of limb was particularly required. But these amusements for the young and the manly were not all; the old of the male sex, and all ages of the female, found somewhat to interest them. Seats were placed in front of the house for the more staid or timid part of the company, commanding a view of the whole lawn, but containing at the same time its peculiar diversions. In the centre of these grandsires and their grand children were stages erected, on which were jugglers performing tricks ascribed to nothing less than direct intercourse with Satan, besides dancing, tumbling, and balancing, by women and men, leaping and vaulting on a slack-wire, posture-making on the tight-rope, dancing among eggs, and curvetting

on ladders and stilts, which shewed the effect of long practice rather than of natural genius.

But perhaps not one of all these games inspired either husband or wife, grandsire or grandchild, with quite so much unalloyed pleasure as certain scenes a little out of the square already mentioned, and which have not been yet described. Under the trees that edged this archery ground, half-a-dozen bonfires were kept unceasingly bright and fierce, and necessarily so, although it was midsummer; as each one was very much more for use than for ornament, being surmounted by the whole carcase of an ox, a pig, or a sheep, which it was to fit for the delicate lips of Christian people. Several rows of trees branched off from near the corner of the house, the boughs of which had been trained to interlace with each other, and form a kind of alcove; at the present time their trunks were hung with festoons of St. John's wort and vervani, and a solid roof was made overhead by ransacking the private garden

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of the fairest and sweetest flowers it produced. In these avenues, long ranges of tables were set out, supporting double rows of trenchers, knives, and flagons, and were flanked by benches which would seat some hundreds of people; and at either end reared their massive bulks two enormous casks of ale, brewed in the first October after the accession of the present monarch.

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disorders of village grannams, into the love adventures of pretty maidens, and even into the intellectual progress of children. Anne now not only talked familiarly with women and old men, but had a kind word and a smile for the sturdy youth whom, perchance, she had not spoken to since the last birth-day. The poorer portion of the Granville family of course smiled where the heads of their family smiled; and even those who had not been made pliant by poverty had a cheerful salutation for every one whom love for the family had brought there.

As this was the first time that any member of the family had appeared on the lawn this day, it was a labour of considerable duration to return the good wishes, or to make the happiness, by a personal notice, of all those who desired to attract their attention. These reciprocating compliments were stopped in the midst by the sound of a trumpet among the trees, and the simultaneous ringing of a bell in the tower, immediately after which a score of men, in the Granville livery, armed

with huge knives and axes, rushed from the kitchen door, and ran at full speed to the range of bonfires; the company in the park moving at the same time towards the tables, where they were set in families, according to previous plans. Before all the people were seated, the serving men had plucked down the beasts from their fires, and cut and chopped them into joints sufficiently small to be carried by a man, and to be set on the table. In a very few minutes the archery ground was as bare of human beings as a desert, and the hall as the eastern city dispeopled by magic; but the whole range of tables was lined with men, women, and children, as close together and as full of life as can be imagined. Huge dishes of earthenware and of wood, filled each with its luscious joint, floating in gravy, were set on throughout the table; the casks were tapped, and their contents directed into capacious tubs, from which the men filled their pitchers and supplied the tables; and very few seconds elapsed before half-a-dozen

knives were cutting their way into every joint on the tables.

No distinction was made in the quality of food provided for the different orders of guests. The knight and his family sat together at one end, and were supplied from the bonfires, the only difference between their meal and the others being, that it was eaten with perhaps a little more order and attention to the customs of the higher class. Indifference to the solid materials of feasts inevitably leads to delicacy of manner, and formality: the poor will never learn refinement until they are accustomed to have their bellies wellfilled. But perhaps on the present occasion all classes were satisfied, as indeed they ought to have been, so far as the present was concerned, since they were all able to do as they would. The hungry and thirsty could eat and drink as much as they chose, and see their friends and kinsmen do the same; those who loved form could observe it as much as they liked, and those that loved the

glad to be celebrating the day. Sir Thomas, at the head of the feast, looked very stately and grand at being the first man and presiding spirit of that large assembly; his daughter was all blushes and smiles, either because she was the observed of all observers, or perhaps because she happened by chance to be seated next to Master Markham, who seemed by no means ill satisfied with his position; and Ralph, the wise man, too much favoured to sit down with the peasants, too careless to be a waiter, and not quite high enough to sit at his master's table when noble visitors were there, had secured a trencher and pitcher, and quietly seated himself on the grass behind Mistress Anne, where he was making good use of his teeth to his own most perfect satisfaction.

Eating and drinking are the most uninteresting occupations in the world to read about, unless they are entertainments to come, which one reads on a card of invitation. That will be a very sufficient reason why a more particular description is not

given. It will suffice to say that this dinner was no exception to the general rule. At the commencement, teeth were used more than tongues; people paid more attention to their trenchers than their neighbours; their doublets grew rounder the longer they sat; their faces appeared to lose their angles, and settle into a confirmed expression of universal philanthropy: and as knives were less vigorously applied to joints, and hands less frequently went to mouths, personal civilities grew commoner, and men who had any eloquence, or thought they had, began to speak, by which of course there came to be a hubbub throughout the whole length of tables.

Now, although good taste suggested that there should be only one class of provisions for all those who were to dine together, in consequence of which, joints of roast and boiled, and strong ale, had been the sole provisions for all classes of this mixed company, yet Sir Thomas enjoyed a cup of old wine with which his cellar

fully supplied, and the delicate skill of his culinary professor, as well as any one in England, to say nothing of an hospitable desire to enable his guests to enjoy the best, and to allow the serving-men and women to have their enjoyments after their work, by taking the places vacated by their masters. As soon, therefore, as he saw that the operations of carving and eating were beginning to be performed languidly, and that sitting at table was a work of labour to the younger branches of the company, he desired to observe a proof of their skill with the bow before he left them; intending, perhaps, to break up the party while they were sober, so that they might not be incapacitated for the in-door amusements of the evening. A dozen men started from their seats as soon as the knight had spoken, and went, bow in hand, to the spot where they aimed at the prickes, eager to exhibit their skill before such distinguished judges. The shooting was very good for an age when it had become a mere amusement; for, being divided

into pairs by lot, one, at least, in every pa
hit the bird at the distance of four hundr
yards. The conquerors were again divid
into pairs, and shot against each other un
there was only one unconquered man, w
was an old woodman, in full practice f
fifty years, and his last arrow was still fix
in the breast of the bird.

"A brave shot," cried the Knight, "a
a right noble exercise. Mind me, Ann
that I reward the old man to-morrow fo
his skill. England, my friends, has neve
been the same country since her old weapon
were discarded, and a soldier shall neve
more get such renown. For what is th
cowardly hand-gun and harquebuss, which
a child may use against a giant or a brave
knight, compared with the long-bow, the
cross-bow, and the broad-sword, which re-
quire an eye so true and a hand so strong
as no one can obtain but through long prac-
tice and discipline? Truly sorry am I that
our young gentlemen think more of their
brave dresses, their silks, and their feather

than of these old British accomplishments, which every gentleman was expected to possess when I was a boy with the late King Harry."

"Very true. Nothing like the fine old English customs," smilingly replied some of the junior Granvilles.

"Nay, Sir Thomas!" cried Markham, "your reproof is rather too wide. Young gentlemen are as brave now as ever, but they must fight with the weapons their commanders appoint; and though the gun hath put aside the bow in serious fight, yet are there thousands who can draw a bow and send an arrow passing well. Yea, I myself, with your good will, though I boast not to rival the mighty feats of Robin Hood, will take a turn with yonder men."

"Nay, good Harry," replied the Knight, "my words touched you not, for I know my worthy friend, your father, keepeth bright, by use, the weapons we practised many years agone. You are expert with your sword, and manage a horse as boldly as

any man; and that sufficeth for a gentleman. Besides, Harry," whispered the Knight, "I would not have you try your skill with yonder men, for you will be sorry to be foiled before so many people."

"Nay, I will not say what I am afraid to attempt!" cried Harry.

"Well, well," said the Knight, laughing, "it will be something new for a courtly gallant, like Master Markham, to stake his honours on a combat with my forester at his own weapons. But remember, Harry, the old statute of Harry the Eighth, which permits persons under twenty-four to set up their mark at only eleven score yards—you are not quite twenty-four, I believe."

"I wear hair on my lip," said Harry, good-humouredly, "to shew that I esteem myself a man; and if I claim the privilege of a boy, it shall not be in using their weapons."

So saying, the young man ran off into the archery-ground, accompanied by several young friends among the visitors, and fol-

ved by the approving eye of the Knight, d the somewhat anxious one of his ughter.

Half-a-dozen young gentlemen joined themelves to the party that had been shooting, and arranged a match similar to the former ones; but the greater portion of these gallants justified Sir Thomas's strictures, their arrows flying desperately wide of the mark. The result of the match was, that Harry and the knight's forester, who had won the former match, now left their competitors, and were at last obliged to try their skill against each other. They accordingly shot by turns at the Gallic effigy, every time receiving the loud acclamations of the company, though with a result little satisfactory to themselves. The gentleman and the forester hit the bird at every shot, and therefore no result was obtained beyond that of shewing that they were both very good marksmen. At length, Harry said, "Trust me, Master Forester, there is small amusement at sending our arrow through yonder

painted bird, for it is merely child's play. I would as leave shoot at the butte as a mark like that, where the distance and the height are always the same. Bring one of your forest quivers, and let us choose our mark and our arrows as we see fit."

A boy was immediately sent for a bundle of arrows of different weights and forms, and when he returned, Markham said, "Now, good forester, choose your mark, and the boy shall hold our arrows. What say you to the middle bar of the window in yonder tower?—we shall know a hit by the mark on the bar."

"Why, Master Markham!" cried the forester, in surprise, "that is five hundred yards off, and forty yards from the ground—nobody shoots at such marks in these days."

"Let us try, nevertheless."

"Nay, I might as well shoot at the sun. I can hit a steady mark at twenty score paces, if it be bird or beast, but I cannot shoot at a rod that is as good as forty score paces."

"Friend forester," said Harry, "you are ght good marksman, and would hit the rk, were your eyes as young as mine; though I am loth to beat you, I am allenged by the knight, and must do my st. These prickes set up at twenty score aces spoil good archers, by causing them o give the same compass to every arrow. would never shoot twice at the same mark."

While the young gentleman was saying this, he examined the string of his bow very carefully, and then selected an arrow which he judged to be the fittest for this long shot. Then drawing himself erect, as though he would exhibit his excellent figure to the best advantage to some that were looking on, he took the bow, as tall as himself, by the middle, with his left hand, and putting the neck of the arrow carefully on the string, drew it back against his right ear, until the head of the arrow touched the hand which grasped the bow; in a second the aim was taken, and, with a slight jerk,

the arrow was discharged, and in the twinkling of an eye struck the bar of the castle window, a quarter of a mile off, and bounded back fifty yards into the park. The forester was beginning to express a somewhat mortified admiration of the young gentleman's skill, when the other interrupted him, saying, "I promise you an excellent new bow, of the best foreign yew, to shew how I love skill; and I will spend a day with you shortly in the woods, when we shall improve each other. But see, yonder cometh a swallow high over head. Now for a shot."

The forester hastily selected an arrow, and shot: the aim was true, for the arrow struck the bird; but as it was flying away feebly, Markham sent another arrow after it, and the bird fell down with the arrow through its body, nearly up to the feather.

By this time the younger branches of the company had left the bower under the trees, and were spreading themselves over the ground, and Master Markham, fond of

these old pastimes, and excited by his late competition, was very soon as busy and as interested as any rustic in the park. He had contrived to introduce the quintain, and even had run one course, when, chancing to look towards the dining-tables, he found that his party had left, and saw that they were observing the amusements from a window of the house.

This made a great alteration in his feelings—he lost at once all his delight in these manly exercises, and very shortly seized an opportunity to go towards the house. Many an anxious glance did he cast at the group of merry faces that were turned towards him from the bay-window. There was beauty, as well as grace and splendour, regarding him, and yet, when he was close to the door, instead of entering, he turned aside, and went into the garden.

It may appear strange that so gay a young gentleman should prefer the solitude of a garden to the splendour and merriment

of the hall—that he should rather admire the beauty of trees than of women—the breath of flowers than the taste of wine; but the strangeness of his conduct may in some degree be done away with when it is mentioned that his solitude was not perfect in the general sense of the word, though it was solitude of the very sweetest kind, namely, that which is shared by a beautiful woman; for he had not advanced fifty paces into the garden when he beheld Mistress Anne. A blush flitted over the young lady's face as Master Harry approached her, but recovering her usual manner, she said cheerfullly, "I was just thinking, Sir Knight of the Painted Bird, what trophy your conquering arm would take from the person of Thomas Gillet, our forester. His jerkin or doublet would be somewhat too plain to please the ladies of Essex; and his bow is not his own. Wherefore I should advise that he be commanded to present himself to the lady of your worship, and proclaim the merit of her knight."

"Fair lady," Harry commenced; but he was interrupted by her saying—

"Nay, fair sir, no pretty words of compliment for me; I am a country girl."

"Well, then, Mistress Granville, who thinketh herself not fair, I fear you consider me somewhat childish or vulgar in that I ventured my skill against your Thomas Gillet. But while I may say nothing to you that might be considered words of compliment, I may say that so highly do I reverence Sir Thomas Granville's opinion, that I could not rest quietly while he spoke so disdainfully of young gentlemen on points wherein I knew myself not deficient."

"I do not esteem your skill as you say," she replied; "the practice of archery is very useful. Save for his merit as a bowman, Thomas Gillet would have been thrust from our service every day these two years, for drunkenness and idleness."

"I will never more touch bow, save on my own ground," said the young man, somewhat puzzled to know whether he was really

laughed at; "and I trust that when next I exhibit my skill before you, it may be in somewhat that you love."

"What, young gentleman, you can dance and sing a French song by the book, and play a lively strain on the recorder!—you know I understand nothing beyond cooking a joint of meat, and spinning flax for our linen."

"It becometh you well to undervalue your own learning," replied Harry. "A lady appeareth never so amiable as while she speaketh humbly of herself. Yet, trust me, Mistress Anne, no man that looketh on you will believe you in your most fitting place when you stand with a ladle over a smoking mutton, or hold a distaff on your shoulder."

The mind of the young lady is not to be discovered in her words. In this I mean not to utter the common-place sarcasm against the better sex; but to say, the real meaning of her ironical language is not to be discovered by one that has not an opportunity at the same time of looking in her

face, and hearing her voice. Master Markham discerned nought that was bitter in her irony, and he had an opportunity of looking into her face, a privilege which he did not neglect. So far, indeed, was he from becoming angry at her reproaches, or finding anger in them, that before she had spoken the words last reported, he had taken her hand and drawn it, against a very gentle and lady-like resistance, under his arm, where it seemed to rest comfortably and peaceably.

At this time, they were nigh the gate of the garden, when, of course, true female propriety would have taken the opportunity to return to the house rather than be alone in a garden with a young gentleman, although he might be tolerably handsome and agreeable. But it is probable the young lady did not see it, or was thinking of some other thing, for she passed the gate without a remark on the impropriety of what she was doing, and went down the garden with her companion, as though she were per-

forming a very proper and very pleasant action.

The details of their conversation shall not be related, as it would probably be not more interesting than the subject of eating, just now mentioned, to parties not personally concerned; and there is little doubt that it was pretty much like all conversations in such circumstances. Neither can the time it endured be exactly discovered, unless we take Master Markham's or Mistress Anne's estimate, though they were possibly rather under the mark; for they had walked only a few times to and fro the length of the garden, when the trumpet sounded, and the bell rang, and though they were quite certain it could not be so late, it seemed wonderfully like the five o'clock summons to supper.

The two young persons hastened to the house, in spite of their conviction that it could not be supper time; and on arriving at the hall found that they had counted the hours by rather different clocks from those

used by the rest of the world, since all the people they saw really believed that supper time was come, and were bending their steps towards the great doors of the hall.

This hall was now a very noble sight. It was nearly the only room the interior of which had not been somewhat altered by the tastes of modern times, and probably its magnitude as well as its beauty had been the causes of its preservation. This hall had for several generations been not only the usual meeting-place of the lords of Clawton with all strangers, but the court of justice of the lord of the manor, the grand scene of the sports of several parishes under his control, and the place where his retainers had been called together for the field, and many a hundred of them drilled in the exercises of war. It was about sixty feet in length, by forty in width and height. The walls, to twice the height of a man, were panelled with dark oak in the pointed style, the corbels and capitals of the pillars and arches richly carved. Above this, the

wall appeared of a stone colour, in the few places where it was visible; for there were half-a-dozen windows on each side, and between them portraits of the Lords of Clawton, some painted on canvas and panel, by Hans Holbein, Giulio Romano, and Paolo Veronese; and others carved in wood by native artists, who left little fame behind them, as they certainly had not taken the best method of obtaining praise—that is, by flattering their subjects.

Above the windows and portraits appeared the huge grinning corbels of the elaborate roof, in dark oak, like the paneling below. Of this roof little could be discerned now, saving the vast carved beams that crossed the hall at every six feet, and the myriads of graceful arches of a hundred different dimensions, which shot up on high, and hid their delicate points in the gloom that eternally rested on and gave a mysterious grandeur to the upper portion of the ceiling. But at the present time less than usual of this decorated roof was visible;

as every beam was twined with summer flowers, and garlands of the sweetest and fairest were suspended from every corbel, reflecting their beauty, and breathing their sweetness over all below.

But the principal attraction of the room at present was the floor. Three tables, with benches on each side, were extended along the room, and very abundantly provided with joints, both cold and hot; the fires originally lighted for cooking having been kept bright for the performance of certain ceremonies peculiar to the day. Along the walls were tables supporting huge pitchers of ale and wine, and magnificent silver vessels of inestimable value; the bottom of the hall was graced by two casks of ale, running gently into a kind of cistern; and the top, to the extent of about thirty feet, was raised a yard higher than the rest of the room, and had its own table, and couches, and provisions. This was the dais, a place peculiar, both in eating and other ceremonies, to the lord of the hall and his personal friends and kindred.

As fast as the people entered by the great door, they gathered their families about them and chose their places, or those who had no families, seated themselves by their friends; and, at another sound of the trumpet, announcing that the tables were filled, the folding doors at the back of the dais were thrown open, and the knight and his guests entered and seated themselves at the upper table.

It may be supposed that as Master Markham and the lady of the feast had been so much together this day—having been side by side at dinner, as well as in the rather long walk after—they would find it pleasant to be separate now. Sameness is proverbially wearisome, and it was very reasonable to suppose that the young gentleman would be glad to try his arts of pleasing on some other of the ladies who would have the charm of novelty, and on whom the small chatter which had been employed before would be as powerful as when first used; and that the young lady would be very

sorry to waste her beauties and fascinations on one gentleman, when there were half a dozen at hand that could be made to feel them. But strange to say, Mistress Anne Granville and Master Harry Markham still made their appearance together. He was at her side when she entered the room; when she sat down, he took his place next to her; and so far as can be judged from outward appearances, they were by no means tired of each other's company, or desirous of the pleasure of change—a fact which is not to be accounted for without supposing them both to be under the influence of some mysterious kind of attraction.

The proceedings now commencing were of more importance than those just described to have taken place in the park; for, not only had the athletic amusements, always interesting in some degree, though of daily occurrence, drawn the general attention from modes of amusement peculiar to the day, both as Anne's birthday and the Vigil of St. John, but evening was now coming

on, wherein the people were all to be shut up to delight themselves with in-door amusements which all could equally enjoy, and to witness the exhibitions which the family was to bring forward to please them. Even the meal was very different from the former one, being not only like that in its capacity to satisfy hunger, and give nourishment to the body, but adapted also to appeal to the mind and the fancy, and to excite laughter and admiration. There was not now, any more than at noon, a dish set before a guest to be eaten, which was of an unsubstantial kind; but in everything now produced, a little imagination and design were bestowed, as though the mere satisfying of a natural want were not to be all the enjoyment. A huge piece of beef was at the head of the table—beef, at least, it seemed to be, from the few glimpses that could be obtained through a hundred circles of chain that were bound about it. The honest man who was first to attack it, poked at it with his knife in all directions, in hopes of finding a place

not fastened—but in vain; and it was not until his temper was slightly moved by the laughter around him, that chancing to cut the chain asunder, he found that it was a piece of boiled beef surrounded by a chain of carrots. A little further down, a litter of pigs, roasted whole, were set on the table, harnessed together like a team with chains of sausages. The next joint was a fine piece of mutton, which, on being cut, was found to be merely a shell filled with water, to the intense chagrin of the carver. A little further, was a tray full of pigeon pies, one of which, on being cut, let out a flock of little birds, and another was found to contain nothing, which was very amusing to all but those who opened them. Thus the laugh was kept up along all the tables, as there was not a person who was not within reach of some quaint trick; and whatever the trick might be, it was sure to be heartily enjoyed by all that were not themselves laughed at.

This part of the amusements found our old friend Ralph exceedingly busy—nothing

could have more delighted him—nothing could have won his more earnest assistance in carrying out its spirit, and he was now the most active waiting man in the room. His aid was perhaps not altogether such as the servants of a feast would desire, that everything might be done with the solemn order, the rather melancholy steadiness, with which feasts are generally invested. But at this time of the evening little order was intended to be observed; for if there was not a lord of misrule appointed, every one was expected to please himself, with as little attention to any fixed rules as though that unformal personage presided over the scene. This was, then, a good time for practical jokes, both because they were now permitted among the amusements, and because they were the kind of jokes that touched the somewhat coarse fancies of the uneducated people, if not of those who may be supposed to be educated because they were rich; and in this branch of the entertainment Ralph was a very zealous assistant.

There were, of course, very few faces present which he was unacquainted with, and of the few that were strange, he soon picked out the history; a very essential kind of knowledge for one that loves mischievous jests.

Right heartily did Ralph laugh at the tricks he played, and many a laugh did he create through the whole extent of the room; for even those who did not see the jest would inquire into the cause of the laughter; and as Ralph was so well known, a narration of it was just as laughable as the jest itself. Thus when Harry Swasher, the armourer, who was thought a bit of a coward, had sent his trencher to the carver of the beef, Ralph contrived to return him a trencher containing the head of a craven cock. Before the laughter produced by this essay was ended, a pitcher of pure water was placed before Tom Swillpot, the yeoman's man, who was notorious for his aversion to the simple element; and Dame Swillet, who was known to possess a very extensive and fluent lan-

guage of the keener sort, was surprised to find a neat's tongue on her plate pointed at the end, and half a dozen skewers through it. These essays were very well taken, and an account of them ran throughout the room; but Ralph knew this reputation to be dangerous, and shaking his bells, sought a new quarter for the exercise of his genius. Stepping on the dais, he crept round the principal table, until he reached Sir Thomas Granville. With great gravity, Ralph prepared a dish from a capon, on the side table, set apart for the dais; and as soon as the knight's plate was empty, the fool stepped to him, and presenting his dish, said—

"Sir Knight, I have brought your worship a goodly dish, even the pope's nose. I would have brought you a bishop's fist, but that I feared it would buffet you."

Sir Thomas turned about in very considerable rage at hearing these words; but he was too late for Ralph, who had darted into the body of the hall.

"Oh dear, Dame Snarrel," cried he now

to a woman at table, "what shall I do? How shall I do to keep the peace?"

"Between whom?" asked the dame.

"Oh, Dame Snarrel!" said Ralph, very gravely, "my right hand and my left are terribly spiteful and quarrelsome: they never get near one another but they begin to buffet each other. What shall I do with them?"

"Why tie them apart," cried the dame.

"Yea but they be man and wife," said Ralph; "and they be always together at bed and board, though they do cuff one another."

There was a loud laugh at this, as Dame Snarrel's husband was no ways noted for having a very smooth time of it with his wife.

"Would you take a morsel of venison?—we hear that you love Clawton deer!" cried Ralph, to a young man that was rather more than suspected of a little private sporting by the moonlight.

"It's a foul lie," cried the man; "I did never shoot a stag in the park in my life."

But Ralph was out of hearing of this confessing denial: he had got upon the dais, and presenting himself, with a long face, to Mistress Anne Granville, said—

"Oh dear, Mistress Anne, I have had a sore mishap this afternoon!"

"Indeed, Ralph," said the young lady, "what hath been the matter?"

"I was walking in the garden, this afternoon, in my favourite walk—you know the path shaded with trees, under the north wall?"

"Yes."

"Well, I had walked there about an hour this afternoon——"

"This afternoon, Ralph!—at what time?"

"From three till four."

"Nay, Ralph, you mistake; I am sure you were not in that walk."

"Do you say so, Mistress Anne? then I will appeal to Master Markham. Did I not walk from three till four this afternoon, in the shady path on the north side of the garden?"

"You did not, certainly," replied Markham.

"And how comes it," asked Ralph, looking slily at each of them, "that both you good folks are so assured that I did not walk there?"

Anne looked on the table with some little confusion, and Harry prepared to scold the inquisitive fool, when, assured that he was understood, he desired no other triumph, but rushed away into the crowds below.

It must not be supposed that Ralph, under the guise of simplicity, was a clever satirist, amusing himself with detecting and displaying the follies or weaknesses of others, and was cunning enough to preserve himself from all traps laid for his own feet; for he had no sooner set foot on the floor, than some one whom his gibes had nettled managed to put his leg in the way, and Ralph pitched forward in his rather hasty walk, and tumbling over three or four women, fell on the table, where his head came into a dish, well supplied with gravy.

This mishap silenced him for a considerable time, as it turned all the laughers against him.

With an abundance of these quips and jests did the supper pass, and laughter, loud and hearty, supposed to assist digestion, was not only very needful at their substantial meal, but was very abundant. Hearts were merry, and the poorest jests were therefore well received; the feeling of enjoyment in the heart, contributed to the amusement more than the skill of the inventor; for all that was poor in imagination became good, through the spirit with which it was received.

As soon as eatables were done with, a door was opened at the bottom of the room, and a huge lion entered, glaring on the assembly. The younger branches of the assembly ran away as far as they could, and even the mature of the gentler sex clung rather more closely to their natural guardians. The lion, however, was a very well-behaved, and considerate animal, who

displayed little desire to make a meal of a Christian man or woman, as your lion of Africa sometimes does. He contented himself with a fierce roar or two, which sounded very much like a lubberly boy after a beating, and a lashing of his tail, much less fierce than travellers tell us is the custom of those outlandish animals. The lion had not long inspired the audience with terror, when a bear appeared, and then a dragon breathing fire and smoke, besides a unicorn and a dromedary. These animals, however, did very little harm; for instead of eating up the assembly, they joined in a dance together, like good-humoured beasts, and when this was done, carried away the dishes of meat from before their satisfied audience.

The tables being now clear, the people crowded towards the upper end of the room, to leave as much space as possible for the expected amusements, which were not long in coming. In a few seconds, a man appeared with pipe and tabor, accompanied by half-a-dozen curiously-assorted animals—

a cat, a cock, a monkey, a dog, a rabbit, and a goose, which no sooner heard their master's lively music, than they commenced a dance, more curious than graceful, which they kept up with the utmost earnestness and gravity. In this there was more variety than grace, as in all the evolutions and figures they had learned, they preserved the step which nature had given them. The cock strutted, the dog trotted, the goose waddled, the rabbit jumped through all the ins and outs, to the very boisterous gratification of the company. After this, a broad wagon was brought into the hall, covered with green boughs, and containing a dozen men and women, almost as diverse in appearance as the preceding dancers. A man who rode in front, in a dress somewhat like that of a herald, proclaimed that this was a new play, called the Triumph of Perfect Beauty; and when the personages began to speak, he declared their names. The first, a man clad in sheep-skin, was Adam, or Old Age; the next, a fellow nine feet high, with a huge sword,

was Sampson, or Strength; then spoke one, in complete armour, who was Sir Godfrey, of Bullen, or Courage; then a stately person with a crown spoke as Solomon, or Wisdom. Sir Guy of Warwick, or Adventure, came next, with the skin of the famous cow; then King Herod, or Cruelty; then Whittington, or Riches; and these, with the exception of a devil, or Vice, in black feathers, were all the males. After all these had made grand-sounding speeches, the Lady Perfect Beauty replied from her throne, among the boughs, where she sat, attended by her handmaidens, Chastity, Prudence, Devotion, and Faith. Then ensued a dialogue of considerable length, and rather doubtful meaning, in which all the personages spoke. After a time, a dispute arose from some inscrutable cause between the parties, when all the males attacked the lady, and as may be supposed, were very much too powerful for her; but in the end, when the lady was sinking, an angel sprang up from the bottom of the wagon,

and with a single blow of her wand, put them all on their knees in submission, when the heroes somehow contrived to find a garland, which they presented to Perfect Beauty, in token of submission. While they remained on their knees, Perfect Beauty delivered a rather long-winded oration on her own charms, abounding in metaphors and alliterations; and her handmaidens severally recited the excellence of themselves; at the end of which, Adam and Solomon, and Godfrey and Sampson, and Guy of Warwick, and the rest, left the waggon very submissively, and humbly laid the garland of Perfect Beauty at the feet of Mistress Anne Granville, when the pageant left the hall.

Immediately afterwards, a man appeared, bearing in his hands a kind of guitar or lyre made of the scull of a horse and wires; following whom was a troop of nondescripts, who danced a measure to his tinkling music. The dancers were human from the middle downwards, having each two legs, possessed of that degree of shapelessness commonly found in

rustics, and even more polished individuals; but the upper half of each body was like that of a less distinguished animal. Dogs, and sheep, and calves, as well as birds, came in for the honour of being thus imitated, and right heartily did the mummers leap about, barking, and mewing, and bleating, according to their respective characters. But in the midst of their amusements, a terrible outcry was heard; the door was thrown open, and in strutted half a dozen giants twelve feet high, armed with monstrous clubs with which they cleared a way for their own exhibitions, and began to make speeches in mighty voices, which sounded very much like men roaring through speaking-trumpets, as, perhaps, was the fact. But before they had rightly ended their scene, back came lion, and bear, and Godfrey, and the dragon, and Sampson, and the devil, cat, goose, monkey, goat, and all the rest of them, and set upon the giants; and there was such a scene of general banging, and slapping, and thrusting, impar-

tially bestowed on each other,—such a tripping up of heels, and sprawling and struggling, as kept the audience in a roar of laughter till some time after the mummers had beaten each other out of the room.

It was now getting dusk in the hall. The sun was not yet down, nor was there a very sensible diminution of light in the open park; but the light was less piercing and brilliant than before: the thick walls and mullions of the windows—to say nothing of the deep-coloured glass and the garlands of flowers—admitted so little of this subdued brightness, that it became dark in the hall an hour sooner than out of doors. There was in consequence a pause from the mummery while the lamps were lighted, which was a work of many minutes, although a score of hands assisted. A body of musicians, such as they were, made a very loud concert to keep up the general attention: but the people's love for music was very small, compared with their taste for the more amusing entertainments of tumbling,

fighting, and grimace; and a call arose, *timid* and solitary at first, but rapidly swelling into a general acclamation, for a —sermon.

It must not be inferred that a sermon was necessarily an appropriate continuation of fighting and grimaces, as well as tumbling: at all events, whatever there might be in common between them was not ordinarily discerned by the people; and in desiring a sermon that was directly in unison with the amusements, the preacher they chose was Ralph.

That gaily-dressed personage was now pulled from the corner, where he had sat very quietly ever since his mishap to fall among the dishes, and nothing loth, was put upon a table. Ralph, walking down the table till he got to the bottom, where he seated himself cross-legged, and looked around him with great gravity, commenced his address:—

"Brothers and sisters, and grandfathers and grandmothers," said Ralph, "my text

—but ask not your priests where it be, for it is long since they forsook reading their Bibles,—my text—but what need I should say where it is to be found, since well I know ye never look in a good book? But if any-one ask ye where ye had the piece of wisdom I shall expound unto you, say ye that ye read it in Saint Ralpho. My text is what ye shall hear incontinently. Now mark me—when the bishop raiseth his hand, withdraw ye from it, since if it chance to fall on your ear, ye may chance to get a fall." As Ralph said this, he took a cautious glance up the room towards Sir Thomas Granville, and saw that he arose in displeasure, as though he were inclined to inflict a punishment on this insolence. Ralph paused a moment, ready to leap from the table and make his escape; but he saw the knight's anger turned to a smile, as he thought of the folly of paying attention to words spoken at this all-privileged time; and as soon as Sir Thomas had seated himself, Ralph continued as follows: "Ye are not at Paul's

Cross now, but at Ralph's Cross, as here be my legs to shew it. Wherefore, ye scurvy knaves! I will give you good doctrine, for do not I know what a sort of sinners ye be? You that are grinning at me yonder, do not you slay our deer at nights? and you there, to the right, do you not break down the fences to make fires with? and you that look such an honest old grannam, did I not behold you milking the kine at nights? and you that look so demure yonder, did I not discover you in the garden among the fruit? And now ye all come here, and eat and drink of the best, and look like honest folk, when, by my grandmother's own son's son, which is mine own proper self, I swear that never was such a sort of thieves, and rogues, and desperate villains under the sun, as ye be! Wherefore, seeing that the black devil will surely have ye all, and seeing that lovers love to walk in secret places under garden-walls, and knights and priests fall to fisty cuffs, and men be cooked for the devil, like oxen for our feast, the world is turned

topsy-turvy. Wherefore, I will advise ye men, whose brains, if ye have any, be not guarded by double sculls, to wrap the skin of an ass around your heads; and ye women, in this topsy-turvy world, leave off kirtle and petticoat, and don substantial hosen. But, by Saint Stulters the Great, I see that ye be guarded already; for I see the asses' ears are on you men; and ye women that be married, I see ye have got your husbands' breeches. Well then, to proceed;" as Ralph got thus far in his nonsense sermon, which was accompanied by the most ludicrous grimaces and contortions he could invent, a titter spread through the room loud enough to discompose his eloquence, and, by means of a few more hideous faces, he contrived to extend it to a broad laugh. He then sprang on his feet, and entered vigorously into the pantomime of eloquence—spreading forth, drawing in, and flourishing his arms, stamping with his feet, shaking and nodding his head, and moving his lips with the utmost rapidity, yet all

the time uttering not a word. But the more he figured, the more the people laughed at and enjoyed the fun, until Sir Thomas, having called "Peace" two or three times in vain, whispered in a servant's ear, and Ralph, imagining the whisper might not be of an import pleasant to himself, leaped from his rostrum, and plunged into the laughing crowd.

CHAPTER X.

But in the midst of all this pleasant uproar, when every one appeared to be happy, and the very scene was calculated to purge every heart of discontent, there was one not altogether at ease; this heart belonged to the mistress of the hall, Anne Granville. Yet what had she to complain of—what to trouble her? The sumptuous hall, crowded with serving men and women, and plentifully provided with provisions, was a present evidence of wealth: her father was at the same table, kinsmen and kinswomen were around her, and a youth was by her side whom

she did not look on indifferently — what could trouble her? She missed the poor blind girl.

It may appear strange that the high-born lady should be affected by the absence of one so poor and lowly; but it must be remembered that in that age the highest ladies took so active a part in the arrangements of the household—to say nothing of the inconveniences of travelling—that they had little leisure for cultivating friendships out of their own house or immediate neighbourhood. Family or friendly visits perhaps occurred once a year, and lasted a week or two; after which time, the parties saw nothing of each other till the time came round again. It will appear, therefore, that a lady's associates must be found mostly in her own house; and, undoubtedly, if Lady Granville were still living, or had left other children, Anne might not have formed an affectionate attachment to one so mean as the blind girl; but as she was an only child in her father's house, at an age when a

woman looks most for the society of her own sex, she was, in a manner, compelled either to make a friend of one of the serving women, which good taste and good sense forbade, or to choose some honest heart not too far removed from her own door for the pleasure of frequent intercourse. But in selecting Annot, she did not altogether make a deliberate choice. The families of the Palmers and the Granvilles had long been connected in a certain way: all the nets of every kind used by the knight's establishment, during many years, had been made by the Palmers; and it was through the visits of Annot's father on affairs of his trade, when she, a child, accompanied him, that she became acquainted with the good Lady Anne. The lady was very young then, but two years older and much taller than Annot; so that even in childhood she had the air of a protectress. But the tenderness generated by the poor child's misfortunes was soon increased a thousand-fold, by a calamity which made her situation doubly desolate — the

execution of her father by fire, for maintaining the Pope's supremacy, as his forefathers had done, and nine-tenths of his contemporaries continued to do in their secret hearts. This event awakened the warmest sympathy in the hearts of the knight and his daughter, who were both staunch papists; and it will be thought little strange, therefore, that they continued to be kind to the family of the poor man, and especially to the child whom her personal misfortune, her extreme gentleness, and eventually her industry, made so deserving of assistance. This kindness warmed into love in the heart of Anne, as the blind girl grew up towards womanhood—not from similarity, but dissimilarity of mind. Perfectly like each other in fundamental principles of action, hating the mean, the sordid, and the treacherous, and loving the generous and the noble, Annot applauded with tears, and blamed with pity, what the lady condemned and commended with the vehemence of a more lofty spirit; while at the

same time she felt the superior feminine beauty of the nature whose emotions were clothed with an eternal veil of humility and modesty. For this she was compelled to love her. Perhaps, in the depths of a spirit which had caught a tinge of arrogance from the consciousness of high birth, and great wealth, and the habit of managing a large household, there was a secret fountain of gentleness and true feminine tenderness which sprang from the uncorrupted purity of her nature. Perhaps the humility she admired she would have found in her own heart, in a situation in which it would be proper; perhaps she could become, without an effort, through a mere change of circumstances, whatever she admired in the blind girl.

The present day had been one of great delight to the young lady. Everything had been adapted to please her. The magnificence of the hall, whose carved pilasters and beams were hung with the sweetest flowers of summer, and whose walls were

decorated with the armour and the plate of her ancestors,—the company of gentlemen and ladies, and yeomen, with their wives and children, gratified her taste for splendid hospitality; the sports in the park wherein so many labouring men, village maidens, and children, had joined so heartily; the hall tables groaning with the weight of substantial viands, which brightened so many eyes, gratified her purer tastes by sharing so much happiness; the presence of her honoured father in hearty health, cheering them all on to make themselves happy; the acclamations with which her name was toasted, as the presiding and creating spirit of the enjoyment; and perhaps not least, the presence of her father's friend, young Harry Markham, gratified the most primitive of her tastes by evidencing the happiness of the objects of her own affections. But the loss of an expected friend was a cloud in her sunshiny day: enjoyments in possession lost somewhat of their charm, while an expected one was unobtained. Many an anxious

glance had she cast along the rows of happy faces, to discover whether one beloved countenance was among them, and many a time had she stood at the hall-door, looking across the park towards the Cross, for the plain, dull, home-spun dress, which she dreamed not was a poor match for the splendid satin of her own raiment, and the quiet little maiden whom she loved better than all the gorgeously-dressed ladies in the world. But Annot was not there. Afternoon passed away; the shadows from the great oak trees reached nearer and nearer to the door; distant sounds of the plain died away, was settling into silence, and still there was no Annot. The lady was perhaps mingling displeasure with her grief, but the lady continued to watch for it; so that when not voluntarily her mind would might [illegible] was

instantly have dissolved into the most gentle love at the sight of its object.

At length, a little before sunset, seeing all the people busily engaged in making themselves merry, and feeling somewhat alarmed at the absence of her humble friend, Anne threw a short mantle over her shoulders, and walked out into the park, and through the garden into a bower of rose trees, sacred to her own feet, which was filling the air with the perfume of the opening blossoms, but whose greatest charm at present was, that it commanded an uninterrupted view of the road from the hall to the Cross. The Cross and the cottage were indeed more plainly to be discerned now than at midday, for they were surrounded by a brilliant light that rendered even the houses and spires of London as clearly visible as though they were viewed from the Clerkenwell-road. This light was produced by the bonfires in Smithfield, and many other open pieces of ground beyond the city walls, made by the citizens, who were even now enjoying

the holiday, as the murmur of their distant shouts declared. The red glare of the fires shone on the castle and along the park as bright as the sun which was now setting, so that the faintest motion would be visible; but neither in the avenue in the park, nor on the London road, was there a human being to be discerned. The red sunlight spread over the world was not disturbed by the slightest motion. But this perfect quietness lasted not long; Anne had not turned her eyes two minutes towards Islington, when—another proof of the attraction before spoken of—a rustling among the leaves behind informed her that she was not alone evenin this sanctified spot, and, turning towards the disturber, she beheld Master Harry Markham.

It would be impossible to describe the anger she felt at this unexpected intrusion, because, as she thought proper not to declare it even by a single wrathful accent, but kept her feelings to herself, it is doubtful whether she were really displeased at all. She continued to look towards Islington without

speaking, and Harry, though by no means given to taciturnity, went up to her, and stood at her side, silent also, as if she were a divinity demanding the awe of a human being. The love of the young is the only passion that can thoroughly enjoy silence. If the audible language of love is the sweetest that is heard through life, the silent communion of two hearts is not less sweet. The heart bounds and the spirit kindles at the former; but in the latter, the heart enjoys the luxury of its own passion, and finds an eloquent language in the deep sigh and the audible throbbing of another heart at its side. After a minute or two spent in this way, Anne turned away her face from Islington with a sigh rather different from that of perfect enjoyment, when Harry Markham, taking off his cap, and bowing, said—

"If I could believe aught so improbable as that there was a heart not altogether at ease within the bounds of Clawton, where I myself enjoy so full a measure of delight, I

should fear that Mistress Anne Granville were somewhat disquieted."

"Perchance, Master Markham——"

"Nay, Master Harry, if you please."

"Well, Master Harry, then," said Anne, smiling; "for we poor women have nought to do but obey your lordships. I was about to say, Master Harry, that you would laugh if I were to tell you what hath disquieted me."

"Nay, Mistress Anne, anything that troubleth you"——

"Truce to your compliments, good friend; you are not at court now. You will esteem me unreasonable that, with so many friends around me, I sorely miss one that should be here."

"You are never unreasonable, Mistress Anne; and, trust me, I think on such a day as this, not the smallest shadow should rest on your spirit. Wherefore, if I may be allowed so great honour, I will mount my horse and procure tidings of your friend, though never did I desire so little to be on horseback as at this sweet hour."

"I thank you, Master Harry, but I fear you would esteem it an office below your rank to visit the friend I mean. The gaiety of your house, and your courtly life, know not the simple tastes of ours. What will you think of a knight's daughter when she telleth you that the friend she expecteth, and loveth, is but a poor blind girl, who worketh daily for her bread!"

"I will think that any one you honour with your love must have some great virtues, and I should be proud to wait on her."

"You speak like a true English gentleman, Master Harry, and like my father's friend. But I will not trouble you with this office. It will be sufficient that you send one of your men, who can be better spared than our own at this busy time; and he will not miss much of the sport, as my young friend liveth no further from us than yonder cottage, at the Cross."

"The blind girl at the Cross!" cried Harry, in great surprise. "Is that your friend, Mistress Anne?—know you not that she is a—a heretic?"

"A heretic! Nay, Master Harry, she is the truest-hearted child in the world, and no heretic. But wherefore say you this?"

"I know nought of it, for mine own part," he replied; "but as I came through Islington, I met my friend the good Bishop of London, who was seeking her, and besought my assistance."

"Dr. Bonner seeking poor Annot?" cried Anne—"surely you mistake."

"Nay, I do not mistake, if this poor Annot you mention be a blind wench that maketh nets at Islington Cross."

"She is my dearest friend," cried Anne, earnestly. "What have you to tell me about her?—what hath Dr. Bonner done to her?"

"As I came by Islington," said Harry, with a little hesitation, "I met his lordship, who said the girl was a foul heretic that he must examine; and he besought my aid, as he had been ill-treated by ruffians thereabouts."

"Is poor Annot carried away?" cried Anne, vehemently.

"I am very sorry——"

"There will be time enough for sorrow, Master Markham!" cried Anne. "Tell me, is Annot carried away?"

"I fear she is," replied the young gentleman.

"And you, sir,—how did you assist in this violence?" Master Markham was silent, and Anne turned away, saying, in a low voice—"It is enough—I understand you!"

More than the common dew rested on the rose-buds that evening: he that plucked one might have thought the pure beads of water gathered about the folding leaves, and impregnated with their sweetness, gave it a charm which it possessed not in the sunshine—would he have loved it less if he had known that some of the crystal drops fell from the eyes of a beautiful virgin, weeping for pity?

Anne turned away from her lover, and wept with passionate sorrow; when, alarmed at her emotion, he approached, and taking her hand, said—

"I pray you, dear lady, be not so sad—I knew not the girl was loved by you."

"Tell me, sir," she replied, releasing her hand—"tell me how this poor girl offended you."

"She did not offend me," he answered; "I know nought of her."

"How then hath she offended any person?"

"I know no more, by my honour, than I have told you. Dr. Bonner said that she was a vile, stubborn heretic, and desired me to put her in his hands, and I did so."

"You have done a very wicked deed, Master Markham," Anne replied; "such as you will be sorry for, if you value my father's love; and I go to inform him what a kind spirit his guest bringeth to my birthday feast."

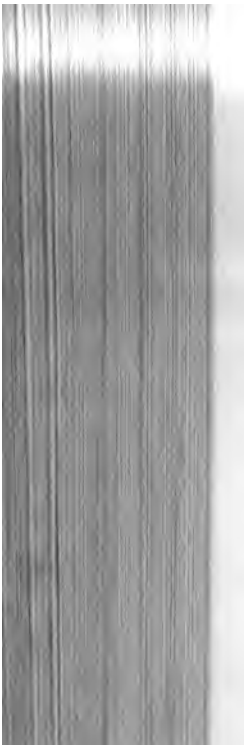
"Nay, dearest lady, I pray you stay," cried Harry, again seizing her hand as she was about to leave him. "There is an anger in your manner which your words convey not, and which cutteth into my very

heart. Whatever offence I have given, hath been most unwittingly—I knew not that this girl was one that you cared for, or not all the bishops in Christendom should have harmed her. Be not angry with me, then, I beseech you, dear lady; for I think my interest with the bishop is sufficient to procure the enlargement of a mere peasant's daughter."

"I am not angry with you, Master Markham; I have no room in my heart for more than my sorrow. You have made me very sad—for myself, as well as for the poor girl that you have given up to torture. I lament, heartily, that I was so deceived as to esteem you my friend—a man that hath such a cruel heart."

"Cruel!" cried Harry. "By the blessed Virgin, you do me wrong!"

"Let me speak, sir—I will not keep you long; and, perchance, it shall be the last time we speak together. I say you are cruel—not that you desired this poor girl should be burnt in the dreadful fires of



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"Annot is not a heretic!" cried the lady—"so good, so humble, so generous a spirit was never tainted with heresy. But I will tell you, sir, that even if she were a heretic, your action were not less unworthy of a gentleman. It may be that her majesty and the parliament see fit to punish such things; but they have their instruments for the purpose — instruments that are necessary and infamous. The Queen doth not employ gentlemen and knights' sons to seize heretic children. Nor, if the catchpole and the hangman are necessary in a state, do we make them our friends, and seat ourselves with them at the same table. Have you aught more to say to me, sir?"

"Yes, dear lady, I say again that I am unfortunate, and not guilty. Yes, I am very unfortunate, that the first harsh words that ever came out of your mouth should fall on one who—who—but I will not again offend. Surely, dear lady, you remember that I have little cause to love heretics or to be kind to them. It is not so many

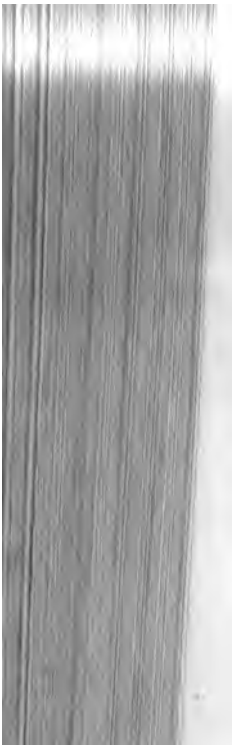
years but I can remember when the religious houses were suppressed through the realm. Yea, I well remember, and shall never forget, that the convent founded by my father, near Waltham, was broken up by ruffian soldiers, and my mother's sister, a most worthy and pious lady, thrust forth from the community she had so excellently governed, and compelled to fly to other lands to find a home such as she loved. Must I forget the grief that filled our house when she died of pure sorrow at the misery brought on her beloved country through heresy! Yea, and if this were not enough to make me hate the name of heretics, I can say how our own house was pillaged by these persons, because my father would not change with the adulterous Henry and the cunning Cranmer; and how he was imprisoned and fined, because he dared to oppose the violence done in his own house."

"I deny not what you say," replied the young lady; "those that are faithful do always suffer most in persecution. But a

good man learneth mercy from the very wrongs he endureth—it is only the bad heart that groweth cruel through trouble; or, if the long endurance of trouble and persecution maketh a good heart bad, we can be sorry that it should be so, without binding ourselves to such a heart when it hath become bad. My father's house did also suffer; but God forbid we should revenge our wrongs on any but those who did them! There are peers and gentlemen who hold still the possessions unrighteously seized—they are the enemies that brave men would choose, not poor orphan children, whom God hath afflicted with misfortune that should kindle pity in every heart, yet hath endowed them with a gentleness that even at this moment doth, I am sure, forgive you."

"Your words go to my heart," cried the young man—"I beseech you pardon me; I will endeavour to imitate the goodness I love in you, and be assured that never will I lay hand on child or woman again."

"Farewell, Master Markham," was the



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Not a rose in that blushing bower was of a brighter or more universal red than the young lady while Harry Markham was speaking: her quickened blood rushed from her heart over face, and brow, and neck; and, perhaps, even at that time the overpowering emotion was not utterly without pleasure; but she was not long in recovering from her confusion, whether of pleasure or of anger.

Turning towards her companion, but looking on the ground, she said, with very little hesitation—"I will not pretend to say that I fail to understand you, sir. It is not the time now for aught but the truth. You would say, Master Markham, that—that you did not come here solely to see my father: you would say that his daughter—in short, Master Markham, that you love me."

"Pardon my boldness, dearest Mistress Anne," cried Harry, falling on his knees

before her, "I know well how unworthy am I—"

But she stopped his speaking by saying —"Stand up, sir; I have nothing to say to you that requireth a bended knee. Yes, sir, you would say that you love me; and it needeth not that your tongue should utter the words to make me know it. The love of a brave and worthy man is an honour to a woman, and had I not so esteemed it, you had missed somewhat of the welcome you have received at Clawton. I deceived myself—I believed not you were a cruel man, that would make war on helpless women: I thought you were a man that in his latter years might be such as my father. I—I looked — I shame not to say it, Master Markham—I looked to be your wife; and, if I know my own heart, I would have been as faithful and obedient a wife as my honoured mother was, or any virtuous English woman could be; but——"

"Dearest lady, hear me!" said Harry; "I see my grievous error—but my reparation——"

"You can make me no reparation," interrupted Anne; "you cannot shew me that I have not been deceived. Think you, sir, that I would have said I love you, that I might give you encouragement? No, sir; it becometh me to make you understand what I did esteem you, and what I esteem you now. An hour agone, I would have pledged mine own honour for yours; I would have held such a deed as this laid to your charge as a vile calumny, and esteemed the man my dearest enemy that had uttered it. But it is over. We shall not meet willingly again, Master Markham. A cruel man is not worthy of a virtuous woman's love, and be you assured that you have lost mine."

Thus saying, Anne walked away from her bower to the house; and the young man, struck to the heart by the resoluteness of her language, and awakened to a sense of the injustice and the cruel tendency of his action, dared not attempt to detain her.

Master Harry Markham did not imme-
diately leave the spot. Loving the youn
lady with a boundless admiration and te
derness, this sudden wrenching away of ho
was a shock that amazed him too much
allow him to feel the greatness of his los
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circumstances had changed so utterly withi
the last ten minutes, that he was at a los
how to act. Their attachment, though no
generated by family interests, had not beer
of a clandestine nature—the young people
knew that their parents sanctioned it, and
had made certain provision for an early
union. In this was his embarrassment, for
he could not devise a plausible excuse for
leaving the house at such a time, nor give
a satisfactory explanation to his own friends
for breaking off the match, while he felt
that it must be broken off, and that he
must depart immediately.

Yet the shock of disappointed love and
the embarrassment of his position were not

the sole causes of his delay. The young man, though not of a dissipated character, had spent his days among the gay and the thoughtless; the sports of the field, the exercises of war, and the gaieties of the court and the palace, had taken up most of his time, and had implanted in his nature an habitual thoughtlessness that did great injustice to the qualities both of his head and heart. He had scarcely ever witnessed a strong emotion produced by moral feeling; all the energy to which he was accustomed was the somewhat boisterous competition in the fields; for, though a heart full of exquisite passion and feeling may beat under a court dress, it requires a rather more observing person than Harry Markham to discover its natural workings through the conventional smoothness of court manners. It was, therefore, with very great surprise that he heard himself addressed with such energy by so undoubted a lady as Anne Granville. Perhaps at moments he thought still that it was unreasonable to

make so much ado about a wench who was a heretic and a poor cottager's daughter. But the thought quickly passed away: the words of the lady went to his heart, and revealed in it a sympathy with goodness hitherto undiscovered. He felt that the more helpless and insignificant the poor creature he had injured, the greater her claim on his protection, and the greater his guilt in oppressing her. The whisperings of pride were of no avail against this new conviction; he loved the lady who had discarded him with a more admiring love for the very deed which was to make him miserable. He could not but feel that there was something more beautiful than all the stately propriety of courtliness—something better and sweeter for a man to depend on in a wife, in the kind humanity which flushed the cheek, kindled the eyes, swelled the heart, and sharpened the tongue of a high-born lady, at an injury done to a poor helpless peasant.

After musing a few minutes over the late

event, the young man walked towards the house. But he walked not as one in disgrace or sorrow, slowly or hesitatingly—he stepped forward boldly and firmly. Perhaps as he admired Anne Granville more than ever, he was more than ordinarily proud that she had just declared that she had loved him; perhaps it was impossible for him to love the newly discovered beauty of her character without endeavouring to imitate her, or to shew that he was not altogether unworthy; and a resolution of this kind might exalt his head and give dignity to his motions.

"She casts me off," he muttered, as he walked towards the house—"she casts me off, as a cruel and cowardly man, and perhaps I deserve it. Farewell, Anne, we may never meet again; and you may never know how well I love you. But—but—even in the arms of the worthiest husband England can afford, you shall know that if I do evil, I can atone for it; and that I could not have aspired to your precious love, if I

had been altogether the villain you deem me."

Having formed his resolution, he entered the hall, too much excited by his visions of the future to fear the face of his offended mistress. But he had not to encounter her averted eyes: she was not there.

"Well, you do right," thought he; "you will not sit down with me at your table, and you will not command me to leave it. I trust the time shall come when you will not hate Harry Markham; but you shall not be kept from your birth-day festival by me."

Having sent his man to the stables to saddle the horses with all possible speed, he slipped from the hall without saying farewell to any of his friends, and in a few seconds was dashing along the road towards Islington.

But he passed not through the village at the speed with which he left Clawton. He checked his horse at the Cross, and leaving it to the care of his men, went to the door of the cottage, and knocked. A voice from

an upper room, which sounded strangely familiar to his ears, replied, "Come in." He opened the door, and groped his way towards the stairs; but while he was still stumbling among the holes of the mud-floor, another person entered from the road, and taking his hand, led him up to the widow's chamber, where, to his very great surprise, he beheld Mistress Anne Granville.

The young lady did not acknowledge his entrance by word or movement, and he presumed not to speak or bow to her; but he said in his heart, "I have done ill again—I have missed an opportunity of shewing my new resolutions; I have missed a chance of beginning my work of atonement. Had I been here first, I would have given the old woman enough money to keep her for a twelvemonth; and now I dare not offer a farthing, lest Anne think I would buy her pardon with gold. I see there is no speed equal to that of a kind heart when it can do good—I have much to learn; but I will learn it."

The awkwardness of this meeting was, however, lessened by the continued lamentations of widow Palmer, who was bemoaning her hard fate, with all the miserable phraseology she could invent, though in such a manner as rather to lessen the compassion with which each person present was disposed to regard her. A long habit of complaining, produced by the tediousness of her way of life, and of scolding her children, as the only persons on whom she could always vent her peevishness, made her look at the present misfortune as it affected herself, not as it affected her child. She was disposed to blame the poor girl rather than pity her in this early consideration of the misfortune: having never been in a condition to protect her child, she was wanting in some of the finer maternal feelings; though, after the indulgence of her own diseased selfishness, nature might probably assert itself.

"Woe is me! woe is me!" cried the widow; "never a poor creature under the sun hath my trouble. What will become of me?

First, my husband is obstinate, and setteth himself against the holy priests, and is burnt; and then my daughter turneth heretic! Me to suffer this shame, that hath ever believed everything, and that brought with me a cow and a pig, and two pounds in shillings of silver—and now to be mother of a heretic! Oh, dear—oh, dear!—how will the neighbours talk of me!"

"Be not cast down, my good dame," said Anne, in a soothing manner, at the same time taking her thin, white hand; "Annot will be soon brought back, as I trust, and they be slanderers that say she is a heretic."

"Woe is me—woe is me!" cried the widow, "to bring this disgrace on my family. Not one of my kin ever believed other than the priest told them, nor failed at the matins and vespers on Sundays and holidays. Yea, my grandmother could repeat ye the whole mass-book in Latin, like a priest, and say fifty aves, and a hundred credos in a winter evening; and to think

that this naughty wench bringeth such shame on us. But I knew what would happen when she took to talking to me about the Bible, and Jesus, and what not, and never talked about the blessed Virgin, to whom be glory, amen. What will become of me! I shall be turned out to starve on the high-way, for no hospital will take in one that hath brought forth such a wretch."

"Fear not, dame," said Anne, "you shall not want; I will stay with you, and care for you, or send one of my women, until Annot comes back. But I pray you think more tenderly of our poor girl, and call her not a heretic. I will not believe that so good a child as Annot is a heretic."

"And doth your ladyship call Annot a good child?" cried the mother, her discontent seeking a fresh direction.

"Yes, Annot is indeed a good child," said Anne. "I believe no better heart is in the world. She is the kindest daughter—the most loving friend."

"Yea, think you so! Well, the girl *did* work without gadding, as your idle giglets do. And truly she did make my bed, and light my fire, and cook me a rasher, and when she had a penny, she did always bring it to me. Yea, so she did, now I mind it. And if I could not send her into London to sell her nets, surely the wench was blind, and was not to blame therefore. Yea, Annot was surely a good girl. Well I remember how she did use to clamber up on this very bed, when she was a little child no higher than your knee, and play and sing all day long to her afflicted mother, the poor widow—and now they have taken her away! What have we done that we must be thus used?—what shall I do without my child?"

"Peace a moment, good dame," said Anne, half ashamed to take a part in this lamenting scene; "here is a gentleman come to speak to you: I pray you look up, and hearken to him."

"A gentleman!" exclaimed the widow, looking up—"what gentleman careth for us?

Oh dear, 'tis Master Barker, the priest! [redacted] will say whether she is a heretic or no, [redacted] he it is that hath caused my girl to be tak[redacted] away."

"Is this true, sir?" asked Anne—"ha[redacted] you been concerned in this violence?"

"In no other manner, lady, than that Dr. Bonner sought to take me; and, being disappointed, seized the poor girl, who I hear did offend him the last night."

"Sought you, sir, do you say? Am I to understand that you, a priest, are one of these troublesome schismatics?"

"If it be schismatic to hate the abominations of the Romish church——"

"Peace, sir!—let not your sacrilegious tongue utter such words in mine ears! I see it all. You have perverted the simple and confiding heart of my poor Annot, and finish by destroying her body and soul."

"If, my good lady," he said—"if to utter that which I believe true, be guilty, I am guilty; and if that which was taught in the late reign be heresy, Annot is a heretic."

"You speak calmly, sir," she replied, "while you behold the misery you have wrought. What had this poor family done to you that you should bring this misery on it? Go, sir, unless you exult in what you behold—the tears of the widow, and the oppression of the orphan."

"If I am the cause of this trouble, lady," said Barker, "it has been most unwittingly, for I did only teach her the truth of the Bible."

"I understand that all who teach heretical doctrines, find their authority in the Bible."

"The doctrine we teach," replied Barker, "may be esteemed heresies, but did you ever hear that this poor girl became an undutiful daughter, an unkind sister, a false friend, through these heresies?"

"I have always heard, sir," said Anne, "that you talk well; but I believed that poor Annot's heart was such as you could not pervert—nay, I believe not now that she is tainted with heresy; for I have known her from infancy, and spoken with her almost

daily, and believe not that so sincere and generous a spirit nourisheth those abominable doctrines."

"You bring, lady," said Barker, "the greatest proof of the goodness of that which you call heresy. Annot doth, indeed, believe what the church of Rome forbiddeth; but while she was not called on to avow her opinions, and lose her friends and life, and so leave her mother to want, your ladyship findeth that she did never fail to fulfil her duty in all circumstances."

"I consider only that your teaching hath brought her into danger of terrible punishment; nor will I talk with you while that endureth. Set her free, and I will dispute with you, or talk with you; but not before."

"I go to do what I may," replied Barker; "but before I depart, suffer me to say that to consider only danger in a religious question, is to slight our consciences; and if we regard danger, we are not fit to receive or administer truth. Your ladyship will remember that the blessed apostles did fall

into dangers such as these, and surely they did not wrong."

"True, sir; but I did never hear that the apostles did lead their flocks into dangers which themselves avoided."

"You judge me somewhat hardly, lady: methinks it is not the time to accuse faithful ministers of selfishness, when they daily give up their bodies to be tortured for the truth; and the time will come that you shall know me better, when, if you refuse me justice, you shall own that care for his own safety is the last that a minister of the gospel regardeth."

"It is not the place to talk of such punishments before this afflicted widow," replied the lady. "I see not that your stay can benefit her."

"You say well, lady, and my stay may injure the poor girl; but I came to render what aid or comfort I could, as soon as I learned the whole of this trouble. I thank God that the widow hath friends like you, though I trust the present misfortune will

not endure long! Meanwhile, my lady, if might, without offence, offer a little money?"

"Put up your purse, sir," cried the young lady; "would you pay the widow for the blood of her child? If ye would comfort her, bring back her daughter; she wanteth none other thing at your hands."

Barker bowed to the severe young lady, and left the room, accompanied by Master Markham, who, when they got into the high-road, slipped his hand under the minister's arm, and walked away with him in earnest conversation, the subject being of course the capture of Annot Palmer, and the cause of it.

By the time Markham rightly comprehended the whole affair, his companion had brought him through the churchyard to the door of the parsonage-house, and now invited him to enter. Markham did not refuse, but walked in, and was led to the little humble room where the minister had read the Bible to Annot Palmer on the preceding evening.

"What a fool have I been!" cried he,

after a few moments' reflection; "why did I suffer myself to meddle with a person that had done me no injury, at the mere request of a friend, who, for aught I know, might be to blame! Surely no fool is so great as he who lightly pulls down his own prosperity!"

"I suppose," replied Barker, quietly, "a man hath a more undoubted right to do as he list with his own than with other people's?"

"Yea, your words are true, Master Barker; but I had thought of it before you reproved me. I am not about to sit down and lament over the evil I have brought on myself: I will put that aside until I have leisure to think and to feel; at present I am bent on a work of atonement. Advise me what I shall do."

"I know of none other mode of rescuing this girl, than craving her liberation from the Queen's majesty or from the Bishop of London."

"I will ride home then at once, and pray my father to crave an audience of their

majesties, or one of them, and I will, before to-morrow, see my friend, Dr. Bonner. Yet, Master Barker, now I think of it, the King and Queen seldom admit gentlemen to their presence until after some days' delay; and, perchance, after riding to Waltham, I might not be able to find the Bishop to-morrow. Tell me, then, whether there would be danger in this delay?"

"If by danger you mean the death of this girl," replied Barker, "I think you might wait in peace; for in this beginning of persecution people are not put to death without some of the forms of judgment; though as burnings become commoner, there will be quicker sentences. Yet, Master Markham, though the life of the girl be safe for a few days, if she be true of faith, and bold of trust, as most persecuted Christians be, she will be certainly put to torture, from which her tender flesh will hardly escape without many a grievous wound."

"She must not be tortured," cried Markham; "surely no man living could touch

such a mere child with a rough hand. As I live, Master Barker, I lifted her from the ground, and put her on the horse with so great ease that she seemed a mere infant—they will not touch her."

"I would I could bid you depend on that; but, believe me, whosoever is old enough to be examined of faith, will not be too young to be punished. There have been children younger than this girl who have had to bear——"

"Speak no more of it!" cried the young man, impatiently; "truly, I am a coward to join against such a helpless creature. What can be done? Can nought be done this night—this minute? I will ride to my father, or send a messenger at day-break."

"I doubt whether I can advise you better than I have done—and yet," said Barker, with hesitation, "there is a man, who—but no, he could effect nothing in this——"

"What is this man?" asked Markham.

"It is one Steynham, a merchant in

London, who, I believe, hath favour with King Phillip: but I doubt——"

"Nay, no doubts, my friend. Know you any other man that could aid us?"

"I know none other."

"Then, in God's name, let us put on our cloaks at once, and go into London to this merchant."

Without attaching much importance to this request, Barker at once assented, being, indeed, like his companion, anxious to be doing somewhat towards liberating the prisoner.

Markham, now remembering his horses and servants, that he had left at the Cross, and had hitherto forgotten, desired his friend to accompany him thither, and they set forth at once. They had scarcely crossed the door-sill when Harry Markham said—"It seemeth somewhat strange to me, Master Barker, that I should have passed an hour with one that professeth himself not of our church, and that I should willingly venture with him on an enterprise that may possibly be dangerous."

"Perchance, Master Markham, your days have been chiefly passed with the members of your own church."

"Truly they have," was the reply. "Never was there other than true Catholic on our ground, or in our house; nor did we ever consort with those that were not of our faith. But this, I begin to fear, was not altogether just; for I find not in your talk, or your spirit, aught which I should not esteem in a true Catholic."

"It is wilful blindness to the goodness of God to refuse to know any kind of men," Barker replied; "and trust me, Master Markham, if enemies would but talk together awhile, and understand each other's hearts, there would be fewer evil passions in the world."

"I believe it heartily, Master Barker; and from this time I will judge of men with mine own eyes and ears, and trust not to others. But, Master Barker, to speak as between friends, surely all of your sect are not men like you—peaceful, and just,

and compassionate, though bold and fearless?"

"I scarcely know how to answer you rightly," Barker replied, with a smile; "you are somewhat moved at feeling yourself engaged in an unaccustomed business; but I will tell you, Master Markham, and I pray you never to forget it, that while the reformed church doubtless hath many unworthy members, as all other communities have, I have found among them men, women, and children despised and tortured, who had never done or wished evil to human being, who were humble, and meek, and patient, yet bold in the face of the oppressor, so that I have been fain to hide my face for very shame."

"Then have I sorely erred," cried the young gentleman, "and I will err no more in that wise. I will talk with you again, shortly, on this matter. Meanwhile, I will look with indifferent eyes on men, and remember that every one born of a woman belongeth to one family. But we are at the Cross."

Markham then mounted his own horse, and requesting Barker to take another, ordered the men to follow as rapidly as possible.

The horsemen rode at their utmost speed, for it was now rather late—so late, indeed, that it was somewhat doubtful whether the gates of the city might not be closed. But they had not advanced above a hundred yards before they involuntarily slackened their reins to gaze on a somewhat startling spectacle before them. They had just emerged from the few high trees which shadowed the road, where, within the last few minutes, the disappearance of the moon had left the darkness of night around them; but the open ground on which they came displayed a scene of brightness more glaring, if less universal, than broad daylight. The vast city before them was at times wholly visible in red flames that shot up from all points without the walls, and from many within; at other times one part alone flashed out, red in the partial glow, and the

remainder stretched away into the gloom, and grew darker and darker, until it disappeared. The churches alone were always visible. The forest of spires and towers seemed either to be built of crimson glass, before which some vast army was moving, or to be themselves some mighty engines at work; for the motion of flames was continually visible along the coloured surfaces of every church, so that the very cross on the top of the amazing spire of Paul's church seemed to rock to and fro. With all this strange glare over and around the city, there was a concourse of shouts like the sound of a hundred vast multitudes. It was not loud or crashing to their ears, because they felt that it was not nigh. It was rather the sound of fifty regiments many miles away than a solitary trumpet blown directly into their ears—the hum or murmur of a distant power; which is the more impressive as the sense is not so overpowered by the magnitude as to be unable to separate the sounds into their elements.

The multitudes of men that made this noise were nearly two miles off, as they evidently were, for the most part, under the city walls, the nearest point of which, Newgate, was at least two miles. The two travellers were at first rather startled at the scene, but, after a moment's consideration, they rode on, sufficiently calm to admire its beauty, and glad that the Vigil of St. John was again observed with the ancient formalities, as they might now have free and unquestioned access to the city. But as they passed through the little village of Clerkenwell, and caught a near view of the entrance to Smithfield, and the bonfires and the enormous crowds of people before them that blocked up the road, they stopped their horses and dismounted. Markham sent away his servants with the horses, to wait for him at an inn in Fleet-street, and the two gentlemen went on foot towards the city.

No reasonable heathen who had looked on this scene of pleasure, of merriment, of

good nature, would have believed that five men had been burned alive on that day, in the very midst of that scene, and under the eyes of the same people. Nothing could have been less suggestive of ideas of human torture—nothing could have more plainly shewed its needlessness, than the hearty though humble enjoyment of the people. Not a house, however lowly, was to be seen that was not adorned with wreaths of summer flowers and green branches of trees; and at every door stood young children, under the care of their mothers, all of them in their best garments, exquisitely clean, and freshly drawn from the press. They were looking eagerly on the amusements which the elder males and the disengaged females were joining in. But somewhat besides flowers adorned many doors: the more substantial houses had set forth cake, and meat, and ale, which any one that chose might partake of; and very frequently men or women servants invited passers by to eat and drink. There was one bonfire in the middle of the

road before they entered Smithfield,—in that open space were three,—another was visible over the house-tops, in the direction of Holborn; several others towards Fleet-ditch, on the right hand; and many were discernible along the walls towards Aldersgate. To each bonfire a road was carefully kept open, by which, at very short intervals, fresh fuel was conveyed to it, and round about every one, some hundreds of the young people were dancing. Frequently might a youth or maiden be seen holding up a garland of vervain and St. John's wort, and violet, and looking through it at the fire, which was supposed to be an unfailing charm against disordered eyes; and many, after looking through their garlands, cast them into the fire, and leaped over, or darted through it themselves, which was not only another charm, but a principal part of the evening's amusement.

There was little order observed on this night by the functionaries of the watch. Newgate was still partially open, a

guard were too proud of their new doublets and cloaks, and too much excited by the good ale plentifully administered, to say nothing of their being human, and therefore too fond of these old customs, to keep a very strict watch over the gate. The greatest difficulty was in getting up to it through the enormous masses of human beings packed in the enclosure of Smithfield. They found the city pretty much like the suburbs: a fire met their eyes as soon as they had passed through the postern; another was in Newgate Market, and whenever they came to a turning they beheld one or more fires now lighting up the streets generally devoted to darkness; and hundreds of people merrily and fearlessly enjoying themselves, where commonly no one moved at night but the aged, slow, and sleepy watchman, at intervals of an hour, a city gallant going to or coming from an intrigue, or a ruffian looking for a prey.

But cheerful and joyous as the sight had hitherto been in the suburbs and the in-

ferior part of the city, it was dulness itself, compared with that which was before them when they set foot in West Cheap. No bonfire was there in the whole range of that great street, nor in Cornhill, great part of which was visible to them as they stood near the Conduit by the side of Paul's Gate: but there was no need of the glare in the present scene of quiet beauty. The street of West Cheap was at all times one of the most beautiful as well as the most important within the walls. Lying directly between Newgate and Aldgate it was not only the great thoroughfare from the West of London to the East, and the only one entirely through the city for the traffic of opposite counties, but all the most important public buildings were in or near it; for which reasons it was inhabited by the most wealthy and flourishing citizens, who took a pride generally in making their houses an honour to the city. Perhaps there were not two houses perfectly or nearly alike from Paul's Gate to the Cross at the bottom of the

street; perhaps there were not two built by the same architect; but all were of the same character, and each seemed the variation of an original mind from an individual model. The houses were generally of four or five stories, each projecting somewhat over that below it, and having its wide lattice windows and its painted beams, the ends of which were carved into grotesque heads that appeared to belong to the hideous forms that propped up the different stories. All kinds of variations from this general description were visible in the long rows of houses; but altogether they formed a combination perfectly homogeneous and very beautiful.

But on this night not only were the door-posts hung with green branches, newly plucked, interwoven with lilies and violets, and mother-wort and orpin, which invested the provisions set forth with a charm like that of a feast in a sweet-smelling country bower, but the whole sides of the street were decorated with whatever beautiful flowers and leaves the nation afforded; and huge

garlands were suspended from every sign. To shew forth this beauty in the absence of bonfires and the moon, thousands of glass lamps were interspersed with the flowers, and threw a faint sweet light on them and the street below, where citizens were walking with their wives and children; while from some house-tops were also suspended huge iron frames, the lamps on which were so arranged as to shew the figures of dragons, lions, and other wild beasts.

But all these pale flames were sufficient only for beauty. They scarcely arose to magnificence; they gave the effect of green hedges strewed with glow-worms, rather than of halls lined with dazzling lamps. But the two gentlemen had looked on the beautiful scene scarcely a minute, when a broad fierce stream of yellow light dashed into West Cheap, before which the thousands of little lamps disappeared; volumes of white smoke rolled over the house-tops, and concealed the flowers as they destroyed their perfume, and at the same moment a

crash of trumpets, and drums, and fifes, as well as the roar of countless voices, was heard, and the citizens hurried away directly to their houses—girls and women to fly to the windows, the boys and men to get between the gabled roofs.

Barker and his companion slunk back into one of the recesses in the street to obtain a view of the procession, the beginning of which was now visible. Around the corner at the top of the street appeared a score of men in different dresses, saving that each wore a straw hat with a painted badge on it, each one bearing aloft an iron cresset, from which arose a soft stream of fire and huge volumes of dense white smoke of a pitchy smell. Behind these were a score of men carrying bags and lights for the supply of these cressets. Then, mingled with other cresset-bearers, appeared a long train of men on horse-back and a-foot, to the number altogether of more than two thousand. These, chiefly old soldiers, were the marching watch of London, and had

still somewhat of the military form; for there were all kinds of officers, from captain and lieutenant down to drummer and fifer; besides standard-bearers, sword-players, demi-lances on great horses, gunners with harquebusses and wheel-locks, archers in coats of white fustian signed on the breast and back with the arms of the city, their bows bent in their hands, with sheaves of arrows by their sides, pike-men in bright corslets, and bill-men in aprons of mail. After these came the constables of the watch, to the number of twelve score, half of whom were in bright harness, some over gilt, partly covered by a scarlet scarf, over which was a golden chain. Each constable had his minstrel before him, his henchman behind him, and his cresset-men by his side. After these came the city-waits, followed by Robin Hood and Maid Marian dancing to their music. Then came a body of the mayor's officers, to the number of fifty, each in the livery belonging to his particular calling; and

then came the lord mayor himself, Sir John Lyon.

This worshipful grocer was well mounted, as was his sword-bearer that went before him in complete armour; the drooping feather on his jewelled cap, the violet gown, and the scarlet cloak, became his comely countenance so well, that it seemed a pity his greatness was to last only some three months longer. On each side of the knight was a troop of his servants bearing torches, behind him a couple of henchmen mounted, then a pageant of a huge giant dragging along a dozen wild beasts by a single cord, then a knight in complete armour hauling after him a dozen giants, each bigger than the former one, and then a fair maiden, who led captive knights, giants, and wild beasts.

After all this came the two sheriffs, each accompanied by his own procession, which was rather smaller than the mayor's, each sheriff having only two pageants and one henchman; but this was made up by an enormous number of harnessed footmen, and

cresset-bearers surrounding them, and by a vast crowd of men, and women, and apprentices, that brought up the rear.

The noise of so great a body of persons rolling through the dark streets of the city, and filling them with music and splendour, was new to Harry Markham, though not altogether so to Barker, who had witnessed the restoration in Edward's time of the custom which had been constantly observed through several centuries, until put down by Henry. But to both it was interesting; to Harry, from a natural youthful admiration of magnificence—to Barker, because he fancied that, among the people who accompanied the sheriffs, he discerned Master Steynham. He had shouted to him at the moment he saw him; but his voice, in the heavy noise of that vast crowd, was inaudible even to himself—it was like a whisper opposed to the report of a cannon.

As soon as the followers of the procession had become somewhat less densely wedged together, the two gentlemen left their con-

cealed place of safety, and, advancing into the street, looked after the procession. A most wondrous sight it was. West Cheap, from Paul's Gate to the Cross, was full of human beings, afoot, and mounted in all kinds of garments, from the most splendid to the most humble, embellished by the towering and shaggy heads of a score of giants, vividly shone upon by nearly two thousand cressets of burning tar and not much less than a thousand torches. Every head in that amazing crowd, and every flower and leaf on the houses—yea, the faintest smile on the lips of the virgin at her chamber window—were visible in the glare of those lights: it seemed a more piercing light than that of day; and it was confined to this street; for the smoke from the two thousand cressets rolled in thick clouds to the level of the roofs of the houses, and, settling there, seemed to form an impenetrable canopy, which repelled into the street the rays of light.

So very grand, so very picturesque, had

been the whole scene, that our two adventurers could scarcely ask themselves whether such an enormous expenditure of money was for the people's real benefit. In the excitement of beholding it, they would hardly question its utility, and perhaps might not be disinclined to support the amiable philosophy which considers money cannot be spent idly or uselessly in making thousands of hearts cheerful. That the marching watch pleased the generality of the people was to be ascertained immediately after it had passed, for hundreds of persons of both sexes again rushed from their houses to look after the receding procession, and to express their admiration of what they had seen from their windows. Words of approval were uttered on all sides; several even addressed themselves to Markham in the openness of their hearts—both substantial tradesmen on Cheap, and ragged wretches that had slunk from some filthy hole which lamp never illumined.

"Hey, my masters!" cried a middle-aged

woman, with a child in her arms—"hey, my masters, a merry sight this, I trow! We have got the marching watch again on St. John's Eve—a curse upon them that put it down, for England has never been the same place since. What do they tell us about the cost, and that the money would hire more watchmen? What want we with more watchmen? Thieves never stopped me or knocked me down, and folk that gad about city after curfew with money in their pockets have more gold than brains. The watch is as good as when I was a little wench, and it will do now; but let us have the marching watch? What say you, my masters?" Barker would now have led his friend out of West Cheap directly towards Thames-street, but the strong light of the cressets had injured their eyes for the present time; for when they would have turned out of the main street, they could discern nothing before them but a black impenetrable gulf, which it would have been madness to attempt. They followed, then, the slow march

of the procession, until it went from Cornhill into Leadenhall-street, when they turned down Gracious-street and Fish-street, and so into Thames-street; all of which streets, and particularly the last, were beautifully illumined. On knocking at Master Steynham's door, they found, as Barker expected, that Steynham was out with the watch, having been invited by his friend, Master Chester, the sheriff; and the domestic said it was doubtful as to the hour her master would return, if indeed he did not stay all night with his friend.

At this information, the two friends looked in each other's face with considerable alarm, as neither knew at first what was to be done. At length, after much talking, Markham said, "Well, Master Barker, after all, I doubt whether this Steynham would be able to do much; but I cannot wait for his coming. I am determined that the girl shall be freed, and I will at once prepare to see the bishop by day-break; and as it is now midnight, I shall have little time to

waste. Where shall I see you to-morrow evening?"

"I know not where I may be then," said Barker; "but, good sir, I fear you would fail to set this girl free, while I trust I shall do it. If I might be so bold with you, I would pray you to return home, and leave the charge of this matter to me."

"Nay, to no living man or woman!" cried Harry. "I will never give it up—I will give my life to the hand of the hangman first. I will never rest while the girl is within four walls. Where shall I meet you to-morrow, in the evening?"

"I fear we shall not meet again to complete the lesson of charity which we are beginning to learn. I would have you return home to your father, young gentleman; but if you refuse, I cannot compel you. I, like you, am bent on freeing this girl, and as yet know not what straits I may be brought into; wherefore I cannot appoint a meeting with you. Perchance, Master Markham, we may not meet again, though assuredly

you will have tidings of me. But before we part, suffer me to say one thing. You have, or I mistake you, some private interest in this present enterprise, which maketh you zealous against persecution; and it may be that when strangers shall be tortured or destroyed, you may forget your present charity. But I will ask you, as the dearest favour, that if you hear that my conduct, in whatever straits I may be brought, is that of a Christian who endureth and forgiveth, you will in future be somewhat charitable to men who believe as I do, so long as they disgrace not their belief by their actions."

"Truly, I understand you not," said Markham; "we shall surely meet again, for I will have this girl at home before to-morrow at noon; and it shall go hard but I will see you in Islington before the night is over. Give me your hand, my friend. I never thought to have spoken a good word of or to a heretic; but, on my honour, there is is not a true friend in the realm I love so well as you."

After shaking hands, the new friends walked together to Ludgate, where they parted—Markham going to look to his horses, and Barker turning into the city. Shortly after the minister reached Cheap, the marching watch returned from its round by Aldgate, and again he endeavoured to reach the ear or catch the eye of Master Steynham, whom he now beheld plainly by the side of Master Chester, the sheriff. But the press of the enormous throng was so great, that the will of any individual was entirely useless in directing his motions: he even followed as near as he could when the procession broke up, and endeavoured to get into the sheriff's house to speak to him; but it was in vain, and at length he turned his face towards Islington.

CHAPTER XI.

THESE were very busy times for churchmen so zealous as good Dr. Bonner; for though the nation had become good Christians of the one true church of Rome, and had received from the Pope's legate, Cardinal Pole, absolution from apostasy, it was, perhaps, rather a reformation of bishops, nobles, and gentlemen, who had something to save or something to gain, than of the lower class, whose only possession was a conscientious conviction, and whose worldly prospects were not to be altered by any change of

monarchy. Thus it would happen that in almost every parish and hamlet in the nation, the preaching of Protestant ministers had left fruit behind among the humbler of their people. The minister himself changed with the times; the esquire of the parish, the yeomen who were patronised by him, and the small officials who depended on them, like men of sober common sense, conscientiously adhered to every faith that was honoured because it was uppermost; but the religion of liberty, equality, and charity, had fixed firmly in the hearts of a few of the wretched poor that were honest and despised. It will be readily believed, therefore, that, as said before, these were very busy times for churchmen so zealous as Bishop Bonner. No sooner had the court-tide turned towards Rome than all the time-servers who were determined to keep together what they had got, made a point of testifying the strength of their new-born zeal by the energy of their persecution; probably thinking it right that a certain amount of

punishment should be inflicted, and that the more of it they fastened on others, the less would be their own proportion.

Never was such a time of national catechising. Many an old woman, who knew not English from Greek, had her house examined to search for one of Cranmer's or Coverdale's Bibles, a copy of which must have cost more than all her furniture. Many a ragged urchin whose gentle youth was employed in examining his neighbours' hen-roosts and orchards, was made to deliver his opinion to his betters on the real presence. Many a poor wife, whose care for her children made her break the law which commanded her attendance at church on Sundays and holidays, was questioned on the pope's supremacy, though she thought as little about his holiness as about William the Conqueror. Yes, these were busy times, and taught men to be careful of their words, if it did not make them good neighbours and good men.

Of these godly persecutors, Dr. Bonner

was the busiest of the busy; and surely the holy church which numbered him among her ornaments was highly indebted to him, since the celerity of his movements proceeded entirely from spiritual zeal, and was the very reverse of a natural taste for motion. His lordship was now well stricken in years; for though his age was not a matter of greater certainty than his paternity, he was undoubtedly some years over sixty. But age alone had not disinclined him to energy; for the good bishop belonged to that class of men called comfortable, by which is meant those whose superabundance of flesh renders all motion uncomfortable. Wonderful, therefore, had been the spirit which had supported him through this long day's labour—the superintending the execution of five men in Smithfield, not forgetting the endurance of a sermon; then the lively campaign in Islington, where one stubborn foe had been conquered; then an audience of *his majesty* as well as of *their majesties*, and

finally a journey to Fulham and an examination of prisoners. Yes; this had been a busy day for a man of his years and bulk, and if, after solacing himself with two quarts of Canary wine, he lay down to sleep without offering a prayer to a God that loveth mercy, doubtless he thought his works somewhat lessened the necessity of prayer.

But when his good lordship awoke on the morrow, and rang his bell for the serving-man to pull on his hosen and fasten his points, two important particulars of dress which he had for many years been unable to accomplish with his own hands, he might have been forgiven for a little impatience, when the servant presented him with a packet of considerable dimensions, to which was attached the broad seal of the Lord Chancellor, and informed him that a messenger had been waiting ever since break of day. On opening the packet he found a private letter from the King and Queen, thanking him for the celerity with which he had obeyed their commands the week

before, respecting the heretical parishes in Essex, and assuring him of their secret support against all foes, whatever might be their public language produced by political considerations. This letter was enclosed in one from Gardiner, informing him that twenty persons had been sent in on the previous day by the justices of Essex, and desiring him, as the common gaols were now crammed to the fullest, to proceed as soon as possible to London to examine them, that they might be either put away by the hand of the executioner or dispersed among the provincial prisons.

His lordship appeared by no means displeased at the trouble thus imposed on him: he was too much of a zealot, and possessed too deep a feeling of revenge for past persecutions, not to be willing to make any personal sacrifice—at least, sacrifice of personal ease, to accomplish the destruction of the foes of the church. With a voice of rugged cheerfulness, therefore, as soon as he had read through these missives, his lord-

ship sent his man to his secretary, with orders to pen an immediate reply to the Chancellor, signifying that he would be at Paul's church before noon. The Bishop then proceeded to dress himself: but his good humour did not long endure — it entirely evaporated when the servant returned and said to him that "one waited to speak with his lordship."

"In the devil's name, one to speak with me!" cried the bishop; "I shall have thee pull me out of my first sleep to speak to me. Let them cool their heels in the hall, for by G— I will speak to none before I have eaten my breakfast."

The serving-man replied not, but clad his lord, and walked before him into the eating-room where breakfast was already set forth.

If in many points Dr. Bonner may be thought to have varied somewhat from the practices of his predecessors the apostles, in the article of personal luxury or splendour he was sufficiently apostolic. It has

been often objected to the hierarchy of many modern churches, that they appear to forget that the fishermen did not wear purple on their backs, lie on soft cushions in palaces, or give large salaries to professors of culinary sciences. But these objections could not be made to our bishop: splendour of apparel was by no means his favourite weakness, nor did he bestow much thought on refined compositions for the gratification of the belly. He looked more to the substantial. His eating-room was not hung with tapestry, nor furnished with chairs, tables, and cabinets, from the hand of the first carver of the day—the little room was whitewashed like a plain yeoman's room, the floor was sanded, the chairs and table were of oak, as plain as could be, their chief quality being strength. A tankard of foaming ale, a cup of wine, a ham, a sirloin, and a loaf of white bread on the bare table, were the materials of the meal; and taking a hearty draught of the British liquid, the honest bishop seated himself, and commenced operations.

He drew from his belt a knife, nearly large enough to be used as a sword, and taking the ham in his left hand, cut off a considerable slice, which he began to put in a way to follow the ale, when the door was opened, and a waiting-man entered, saying, "And it please your lordship, Master Harry Markham waiteth to see you."

"Desire Master Markham to come in," said the Bishop; then communing with himself, he spluttered with his mouthful of meat—"By the Lord, what can the youth want with me at this hour? I warrant he hath been playing the gallant this night! Perchance he hath tripped a man into the river, or put his sword through him, and hath the constables at his heels. Well, well, he doth right to come to me, for the sheriff would hardly look at these walls, much less seek to enter. Ha, friend Harry, how art?" cried his lordship, as the young man entered. "I am glad to see thee, though thou dost take me unawares. But what is the matter? Yet, stay—no

talking before breakfast. Be seated, and take the ham to you."

"I pray your lordship first to listen to me."

"Nay, Master Markham, I love not talking, while my belly grumbleth for food. Eat, man! but I can offer you no gloves for your hands, for we bishops be bachelors, without wives and what not, to observe such delicateness: but by the Lord, I love not these court fashions, and think it no harm to have the fat of good meat on my hand. I thank thee," said the Bishop, when the good ale and the meat had comfortably tightened the points of his doublet. "I thank thee, my good friend, for the aid thou gavest me yesterday at noon. By my soul, as rank a heretic as liveth in the Queen's dominions; but I will make short work with her, as I am a true bishop. But now to thy business, friend, for I must journey to London very soon, on special affairs communicated to me this morning."

"It is regarding that person I trouble your lordship: I have since learned, that she is not a heretic."

"By the Lord, but she is!" cried the Bishop.

"Then am I wrongly informed, my lord: But even if she be, I have a suit unto your lordship, that she may be dismissed, and I will be answerable for her good behaviour, and that she shall appear whenever called for."

"Strange, Master Harry, that you should give bond for a false heretic, so true a family as yours. The girl, to be sure, is young and fair; and true Catholics do oftentimes shew great tenderness towards fair heretics: but this girl is blind, and surely——"

"You are wrong, my lord," said Harry, smiling: "I know not whether the girl be fair or foul; but you shall know, that my interest is in a very important matter injured by this girl's being in your hands; and I trust for the friendship you bear my family, I may have her enlarged."

"Well, well, we shall see!" said the Bishop; "a heretic more or less is of little account, for by'r lady the prisons be full of them."

"I thank your good lordship for your courtesy," said Markham; "it will lay me under great obligation to you, though I doubt not that the Queen's majesty would have shortly released her, being, as she is, cared for by a worthy knight of undoubted faith and loyalty, even Sir Thomas Granville."

"What say you!" cried the Bishop; "doth Sir Thomas Granville seek for this girl's liberation?"

"I know not," replied Markham, unsuspiciously, "whether the knight doth; but his—that is, some one of his family doth, who would assuredly seek the Queen's aid. I doubt not your lordship will secure very grateful friends there!"

"Know you not, Master Markham," cried the Bishop, in a tone which, in spite of himself, had a touch of fierceness, "know

you not that this knight is a base, ruffianly knave! — that he violently waylaid and hindered me in my sacred office, and called together a riotous populace against me— that he threatened to employ his interest with the Queen against me!—that I did yesterday lay my complaint before the Queen's majesty—and that I would give my right arm to have his head taken off by the public executioner?"

"Nay, I knew not this," replied Markham, heartily sorry for his indiscretion in enforcing his request after it had been granted. "I thought the knight and you were true friends. But, my lord, respecting this poor blind girl, will your lordship please to release her before you depart?"

"The heretic is not in my charge, Master Markham," the Bishop answered; "she hath been taken to London these three hours, and is now at Paul's: I will do what I can for you, but she is out of my hands, and I fear I can do little good."

"Your lordship will doubtless suffer me to accompany you to London——"

"A woman craveth to speak to your lordship," said a waiting man, entering the room.

"A woman!" cried his lordship, turning to his friend, the servant being still in the room. "A woman! now, by the Lord, I dare wager my best gown that if it be a young woman she had rather see thee than me, Master Harry, unless she cometh to complain that one of my priests hath made her a mother *in esse* or *posse*, *in presente vel futuro*. If she be old, I dare venture both gown and cap that she cometh to crave mercy for a heretic husband in prison, when I shall have a long complaint of starving children and what not, which thing happeneth every day. Is the woman young or old?" asked the Bishop, of the servant.

"She is very young, my lord," the servant replied.

"Fair, or foul?"

"Very fair, my lord."

"Then admit her at once."

The servant immediately ushered the lady into the room, and though her face

was now concealed by a thick veil, so that the accuracy of the servant's description could not be ascertained, she appeared to possess a very graceful form, with which, indeed, Master Harry was so struck that he involuntarily arose from his chair, though the Bishop said, supposing he was about to leave the room—"Nay, friend, stay by me; you know what I have just said."

But the young man was not inclined to run away, though he did not again take his seat; which conduct may be understood when it is related that the young lady, throwing back her veil, displayed the features of Mistress Anne Granville.

"By the Lord, my man hath judgment—she is both young and fair!" cried the Bishop, as he glanced at the uncovered face; but, observing the simple earnestness and the absence of levity, amounting almost to severity, in the beautiful countenance before him, he was awed to such a degree as to force him to break off his somewhat impertinent speech in the midst, and desire to be informed of the lady's pleasure.

"My lord," said the lady, "I would speak to you, if you please, without—without any strangers present."

"By'r Lady," whispered the Bishop to Markham, "but this is strange! I could have sworn so fair a young woman would rather have spoken with *you* without witness." Then speaking aloud, he said—"Fair lady, this gentleman, though a stranger to you, is none to me. He is my special friend; and as I am in haste to set forth to London, I must desire you to utter your mind speedily."

If the Bishop had looked in his friend's face while he was speaking, he would have acquired a suspicion that the parties were no such great strangers: but the blush was not produced alone by that. The young man was rather glad that the lady had chosen an epithet of a somewhat favourable kind, like "stranger," to apply to him, since it would have been possible to select a word which would have secretly reproached him; and glad as he was that he had got to the Bishop first, he fancied that he had atoned in her

mind for part of his offence. Harry had not sufficient delicacy of mind, or knowledge of human character, to be aware that when persons of dignified sentiment have formed and expressed an unfavourable opinion, the subject is decided, and it is beneath them to continue to utter latent and indirect sarcasms. The lady, by the word "stranger," accurately expressed the terms on which they stood, and were to stand. The young man was one to whom she bore neither good nor ill will—one utterly out of her mind, as a person she had never seen before; and that this dignified feeling was the motion of her heart, and not mere manner, will be observed in her after speaking.

"My lord," said Mistress Anne, "I have learned that you have here in your palace a poor blind girl that you seized yesterday on suspicion of heresy, and I have come to beseech you most heartily that she may be delivered unto me, or suffered to be at liberty, on such terms as you may think fit."

"Heyday! what a coil is here made about

a heretic wench!" cried the Bishop. "Methinks the girl hath been fortunate to have such friends. But pray, lady, who may you be that offer me terms?"

"My name is Anne Granville, my lord," she replied; "and I am the daughter of Sir Thomas Granville."

"Ho-ho! Sir Thomas Granville's daughter, are you?" cried the Bishop, his temper somewhat changing at the mention of that name; "and pray did Sir Thomas send you?"

"He did not, my lord. I came out of mine own desire to help this poor girl, who is my dear friend. My father would doubtless have accompanied me, or waited on you himself, but, unfortunately, as he had left the house before I arose, I had not an opportunity of speaking with him, wherefore I came attended only by my servant, as I could not tarry until he should return."

"Doubtless," said his lordship, "Sir Thomas Granville would be well pleased to have this girl released?"

"Yea, my lord, he would. She belongeth to a family that we have long looked on with kindness, and I doubt not, my father would heartily thank your lordship."

"And what if I do not release her!"

"Suffer me, my lord, to say"—Master Markham began, but he was stopped by the Bishop crying, somewhat impatiently,—

"You shall pardon me, Master Harry: I will have an answer to my question."

"If your lordship refuse, or be unable to grant my petition, undoubtedly my father will apply to the Queen's majesty, who will assuredly be very willing to do him pleasure."

"Nay, by the Lord, will she not!" cried the Bishop, in open wrath. "Sir Thomas Granville hath less favour in her majesty's eyes than you think. The Queen will not hearken to him, but will send him to me. Yea, and if he dare go into the Queen's presence, she will force him answer to charges against himself rather than grant him favours."

"Charges, my lord!—who hath any charge to lay to my father?"

"By my soul, that have I. Charges that he shall not shake from him until I bring him—but it matters not. Tell thy father, if thou wilt, from me, that the girl shall be kept in his despite; and he shall try whether of us twain be stronger—he to loose her, or I to keep her. By my soul, they know not Edmund Bonner that think I will favour them that do me injury, that wag a saucy tongue against me, and entreat me like a scurvy knave."

"My lord Bishop," replied Anne, with a very faint smile of sarcasm, "I would be sorry to mistake you, and I pray you not to take amiss the question I shall ask. You say that my father hath used you like a scurvy knave; and I would know whether you mean that my father behaved like a scurvy knave, or behaved to you as though you were one."

"Impudent woman!" cried the Bishop, in the loudest tones of anger, "I tell thee, thy

father used me like a scurvy knave, as he is."

"I am afraid," replied Anne, coolly, "that your lordship doth not understand the manners of brave and worthy gentlemen. My father, my lord, hath ever been esteemed second to none in the realm in all that distinguisheth the man of gentle blood; and I will say, that he is utterly incapable of behaviour to you or any man, such as should lay him open to blame. No, my lord, the Queen hath not a more loyal subject, the church a more faithful son, or the court a more accomplished gentleman."

The bishop was about to utter a furious reply, and Master Markham, at all risks to endeavour to prevail on the lady to depart, when old Dr. Tonstall entered the room, immediately behind whom was Master Barker, which led the Bishop's thoughts in another direction.

"Ah, by my soul!" cried our good Bishop; "truly you have done well, my friend, to seize that sturdy knave so early in the morn-

ing. The very man I was about to look f with a body of the Queen's guard. Truly had rather than twenty pounds have th man before me."

"Nay, my good lord," cried old Dr. To stall, seating himself at the oak table, whi was now assuming somewhat of the charact of a judge's bench, "I assure you I had hand in securing this prisoner, if prison he be. I know not the man—pray wh hath he done?"

"My lord," said Barker, "I am not prisoner, but I look to be, very shortly. I man hath taken me, but I have come here my own will."

"Thou hast, hast thou? Well, the Barker, I tell thee for a knave and fal one, thou art bold to come here a confront me; for, by the Lord, before th departest hence, thou shalt be thorough sifted, and it shall not be a little that wi make me amends for what thou didst ye ter morn. Ho, there! men, keep watch roun the door, and see yonder fellow escape not."

The young lady in common circumstances would have retired at such a juncture as this, since she ought to have considered her petition finally refused: but not only did she hope that the persons present might, perhaps, intercede with the bishop in her favour, but the presence and manner of Master Barker very powerfully interested her. He did not notice her or Master Markham by outward sign; it was probable he saw no one besides Dr. Bonner; and while those two persons entered into animated conversation, she stepped back near the door, and listened attentively.

"Your lordship scarcely needed to command your men to guard me," said Barker; "for had I thought of escaping from you, I had not ventured within these walls."

"Nay, I know not that: desperate rogues like you, knowing themselves in danger of punishment, do oftentimes waylay those who are to punish them; and never trust me if I like thy looks."

Anne listened very eagerly to Barker as he made the following reply:—

"Your lordship doubtless is wrongly informed of my character, which is not one of violence; but at this present time, I come to you on an errand of mercy becoming God's ministers, not on a mission of revenge. My lord, I am well assured that you bear me no ill-will for what chanced yestermorn. I meant not to offer any resistance to you, nor did I know beforehand that Sir Thomas Granville would offend you, but was borne out of the church by the people against mine own will."

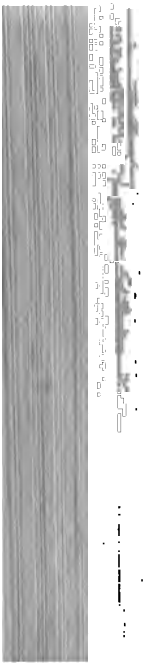
"Ah, ha! against your will!" cried Dr. Bonner; "and I doubt not you very sharply blamed Sir Thomas Granville for the violence he used towards me?"

"I neither blame him nor commend him," said Barker; "it becometh me not to pass a judgment on the feelings and conduct of men of his rank. But when I say that no one hath heard such violent language from my lips, it shall be believed that I would not desire such language should be uttered to serve me: but, my lord, Sir Thomas Granville is a more powerful man than I

and is better able to answer for his actions than a poor man like me. Wherefore, I will beseech you to listen to that which bringeth me here. I have found, my lord, that when you failed to make me your prisoner, you seized one that I know, and have brought her hither—even a poor blind girl."

"By the Lord!" cried the Bishop, "if the blind girl were Queen of England, there could not be more ado made about her."

"I believe," continued Barker; not understanding the Bishop's exclamation—"I believe the poor girl hath not been out of the village this many a year, as your lordship hath not been in it until yesterday, and well do I know that the child hath not a foe among those that know her; wherefore I conclude that your lordship did go to Islington to lay hands on me rather than on the girl, and as I come to deliver myself to you, I trust you will see fit to dismiss her to go home to her mother, who may endure want without her."



" Yea, art thou so wary? take measures with you. I admit that thou art a heretic? thou, a priest, think it so gr put thyself in the hands of th

" If it be heresy to deny t the church of Rome, whi grievous heresy in the chu then I am a heretic."

" What!" cried Dr. Tons priest, say the church of Ro Methinks thou art strangely say so. Why, then, art tho

" My lord, I did say y honest opinion on this mat Bonner was very wroth to h this arose the contention wi Granville, which caused th

what thou hast to say on so strange a case," said the Bishop of Durham.

"I did say," replied Barker, "that I was appointed a minister of the gospel in the days of King Edward, and that I promised and swore that I should not owe allegiance to the Bishop of Rome, nor administer nor frequent the mass, but observe in all things the ritual of the Common Prayer. I did believe, my lord, that the oaths were taken to God as well as to the realm of England: I looked on the true church, whereof I was a member, as utterly independent of kings and queens, and the changes of rulers and governors; for it doth appear to me that God must be very wrongly worshipped here on earth, if faiths, and beliefs, and ordinances, must be all changed because the monarch chanceth to be of a different faith. Wherefore, seeing that God is eternal and unchangeable, his true worship must be so also; and all the power of man, and all the laws that can be made, shall not be able to make me change my re-

ligion or lay down the office with which I have been invested."

"Yea, sayest thou so, man?" replied Dr. Tonstall. "Thou speakest like a man of little learning. If that were true, no change, however good, should be effected in the world. It would be unlawful for a true Christian to put down a priest of a heathen idol; yea, the very apostles did wrong, and should have permitted all the filthy worship of Asia and Europe to continue."

"A pretty fellow, truly!" cried Bonner.

"My lords," replied Barker, "you wrest my words somewhat from my meaning. I believe not that the apostles did conform to a faith which they believed untrue, as you would have me; but assuredly they did never put down by force of their weapons any established faith, as you go about to do. Preaching the truth, they were armed with a power that required no other weapons."

"And so," asked Bonner, deridingly, "when the old faith is professed throughout the land, you will still preach a different one

at Islington, and try which is the most prevailing?"

"No, my lord; I deny not, and I seek not to resist, your power to put me down. I only deny that I ought to lay down my office with which I was invested by a different order of bishops."

"Thou sayest well in part," replied Tonstall; "but if thou pretendest a conscience for what thou doest, we who have consciences must also satisfy them. Knowing that our faith is true, we cannot suffer false doctrines, and thou must be put out of the priesthood; for a church cannot stand if it permit priests who hold contrary doctrines. Thou knowest the laws, and that we could deal very sharply with thee if we would. Tell us, then, if we dismiss you, will you abstain from preaching, and live quietly and orderly?"

"Nay, by God's mother," cried Bonner, "that shall not be! Assuredly, a heretic shall not preach in one of my churches; but, look you, if he have broken the law he shall be punished as any other malefactor."

"My lord," replied Barker, "when I resolved to give my body into your hands, I looked well to the consequences; I made my account to suffer torture as well as imprisonment, and I will bear my lot patiently, so that you dismiss the poor girl that is your prisoner."

"Nay, that shall not be!" cried Bonner; "ye are both heretics, and ye shall both undergo your examination. Think you that I care whether thou deliveredst thyself into mine hands or no, so long as I was armed with her majesty the Queen's authority? No, hide as thou couldst, I would have had thee ere nightfall. But why do we talk here? It is time we were on the road to London; and be sure, Barker, thou shalt follow us very closely."

Anne Granville here came forward from her unnoticed position, and, speaking to Barker, said—"Did I rightly understand you, that my father was in some degree the cause of poor Annot's capture?"

"I know not," he replied, "how far I may speak at present with safety to other

people; wherefore, lady, I must refrain from answering you now, for certainly my tongue shall utter no accusation."

"Master Barker," said Anne, "I believe I understand your behaviour. I spoke some words to you in anger last night, for which unmannerly and unjust speaking I crave your pardon. Henceforth I will believe that the church containeth worse foes than heretics."

"How meanest thou by that, woman?" cried Bonner.

"I leave you to muse on my words," she replied; "and I pray God he may turn your heart to mercy. For myself, I fear you not. I am no heretic or unbeliever, and I believe no seeker of heretics will come to Clawton to seize them."

During this hasty conversation, and somewhat rapid change of actors, Master Markham had continued silent, not really from indifference towards the objects advocated by the young lady and Barker, or fear of the Bishop: he was waiting to see whether

the advocacy of his friends would be effectual, in which case he need not betray his interest in the speakers, nor appear to be indelicately forward in thrusting his aid on the young lady who was so justly offended with him. But now that he beheld an open rupture between Mistress Anne and the Bishop, and the result of Barker's interference to be his own capture, he became in turn a very earnest pleader for the liberty of Barker. But his pleading was of no avail, as the bishop, being highly incensed against the minister, was provided with very good excuses for detaining him; since having refused Tonstall's intercession, and the two doctors being come into the room, it was a kind of public principle not to give way to private intercession. Markham, also, had a very unfavourable time for his pleading, as the bishop was in extreme rage from the last words of the young lady. She was on the point of departure when the young gentleman spoke, but she paused a moment at the door to listen to the result;

and when she found it to be unfavourable, without noticing him, she left the house and mounted her horse. Shortly afterwards, the two bishops, accompanied by Harry Markham, set out for London, Barker being left in charge of the servants, to be conveyed to Paul's church.

But Master Markham derived very little satisfaction from accompanying his friend. The bishop, whatever his talents in other matters, had the common gift of being able to keep back the petitions of suitors that he wished not to offend. The company of horsemen had advanced little more than a hundred yards from the house when a theological question was brought forward between Dr. Bonner and his two doctors, into which Dr. Tonstall was drawn perforce; and every one who knows what such disputes are, will readily believe that it was very far from being settled, or even advanced a single stage, when they reached, at nearly mid-day, the old gate of Lud.

I would not have it supposed that Master Markham was indifferent to these sacred subjects, that he turned a deaf ear to the logical and syllogistical arguments, and wished the whole party at—some other occupation. No, he was duly impressed with the immense importance of those questions that were agitating society, that were requiring learned men to be sent from Rome to endeavour to settle them, and that were compelling conscientious disputants to send their opposers to the flames for taking the wrong side. Harry's objection was only such as has occurred to thousands of very conscientious people; the subject might be a very good one, the treatment very learned, the object very praiseworthy; but he wanted to speak of something else. The doctors of Asia, Africa and Europe satisfied him as little as the person against whom they were cited: Nazianzen, Augustine, and Jerome, interested him far less than they ought to have interested so strict a churchman; but there was one reason for it that somewhat

excused him, and it was that the doctors cited these authors in their original Greek and Latin, of which the young gentleman's knowledge was as confined as possible—in fact, he understood not a word of the whole disputation.

They passed on through Ludgate up to Paul's Cross, and the divines entered a private door to the church, Harry still hanging on their skirts. But at the church door, Bonner, turning to Harry, said that "He was sorry he could not invite him to enter, as they were to engage in the private business of his see; he was sorry also that he found he could not deliver the prisoner to him at present, as she was in the hands of another person, from whom he could not take her; but his friend might be sure that all should be done that could." The Bishop then shook his friend's hand, and left him at the door.

Harry looked about him for a moment in some doubt, and then hastened away.

"This will never do!" muttered he to himself. "I have spent a night and a day

in fruitless petitions to friendship, and I am no forwarder in my suit. I may continue to petition and talk, and do my best, and meanwhile, in a place that I behold not, this girl's torture may be quietly proceeding by regular steps, and in the end she may be securely fastened to a stake in Smithfield, while I am cringing at the foot of some proud or spiteful man or woman. This will never do. If the girl perish, how shall I dare appear before my most noble lady? how shall I make her believe that I would give my right arm—yea, suffer my right eye to be plucked forth, to purchase the girl's liberty? No, I should never see her more; I should not hope that she would remember me more. What had I to do with a peasant girl?—what hath any gentleman to do with seizing criminals?—and to think that I destroy the most beautiful, the most glorious fortune that ever courted a man, and all for taking on myself the office of constable or thief-taker. The girl shall be liberated; there is no middle way. I will free her in

defiance of church and monarchy; my own arm shall do it, and I will trust to nothing besides."

While the young gentleman was muttering these words, he had made the best of his way to the tavern where his men were waiting for him, and in the course of a few minutes they were all dashing along the road towards Waltham.

It must not be supposed that Master Harry Markham's character appeared generally in so unfavourable a light as it has appeared in this narrative: those who knew him best considered him by no means a cruel or a thoughtless man; and some hundreds might have been found in Essex who would have resented rather warmly any such charge made against him. But it may be said, these persons would have seen matter of commendation in this last deed of Harry—the seizure of a heretic would have appeared meritorious; and cherishing strong prejudices on one side of religious and political questions, they would be unsound judges of per-

sonal character: yet in spite of politics and theology, the humbler classes of society are the best judges of human hearts; they can accurately distinguish between condescension or arrogance, and plain goodwill or unaffected sympathy—they are rarely mistaken in their judgment of a disposition, and a man they love must have some good qualities. When, therefore, Harry Markham reached the neighbourhood of his father's house, he was surrounded by people somewhat different from Dr. Bonner and such political and stately friends. He was among a people that looked up to him with as profound a respect as he could feel towards any bishop or statesman. There was actually too great a profusion of friends for his wants; he could have found five hundred in an hour that would have raised the cry of King Harry Markham, or any other at his bidding: but as the rebellion he meant to engage in required no more than fifty men, he was actually somewhat embarrassed by the number of his friends who

would press to follow him. He went home, and made certain private arrangements which appeared rather too serious and solemn for such an enterprise, and then sent his two men to collect each a dozen others that he named in the cottages near, all of whom were chosen because they were unmarried, and most of them because they had not parents depending on them. As fast as they made their appearance, in the secluded part of the park which he had selected, he laid open his plans to each of them separately, after gaining the promise of secrecy; and, pointing out the necessary provisions for their personal safety, inquired whether they were willing to follow him. Nothing could please them better; the enterprise was exactly what they loved. He then divided among them the cloaks of his own wardrobe, and those belonging to the servants, as well as swords, daggers, and short guns, and directed each man to choose one of his friends as a companion, and being armed secretly under their cloaks, to go se-

parately into London before nightfall. Every two men were to go to different taverns, to keep themselves quiet, to speak little, to drink little, and when the taverns closed, at eleven at night, to repair to the dark side of Paul's Cross under the walls of the church, and speak to no person who had not either the challenge, "It is dark about the church," or the pass-word "dark shall have light." Fully satisfied that he should be obeyed, Harry then mounted his horse, and unattended by a servant rode again into London.

END OF VOL. II.

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MIDSUMMER EVE:

A Tale.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MIDSUMMER EVE.

CHAPTER XII.

When Annot Palmer was removed from the Bishop's court at Fulham, she was carried back along with Needham to her former prison, where they found their earnest co-prisoner Barnard. They did not, however, upbraid him, though they utterly disliked the bitterness and coarseness with which he had spoken. He was now in the most miserable condition possible to be endured by a human being that loves the sound of his own voice—he was gagged; and Master Needham, though probably no better than his neighbours, was not anxious to take

advantage of that misfortune to make him endure advice to which he could not reply.

The want of room and other accommodations was not atoned for by the profusion of materials for eating and drinking, which are by some esteemed to supply every human want: not an article had entered the cell since Annot had been first brought into it, which was now six hours. This compelled abstinence was probably not intended; for in regard to food, the prisoners had fared well during the previous night, when they had been left to the care of servants, who are not backward generally in making people merry with their master's provisions. But at the present busy time the servants had too much work on their hands to be able to think of a parcel of heretics, without especial orders to provide for them; and the heat of the weather, and the agitation and talking of the last two hours, began to make the prisoners somewhat sensible of the difference between a home, however humble, in which a man may do as he will, and a

prison, in which he is subject to the will of another, though that other be a bishop.

Annot, however, fared better than the male prisoners: she had eaten a hearty dinner before she was put in confinement, and now she found that the friends who had supplied her then had not forgotten her. The servant maidens, knowing that the blind girl was taken before his lordship, had, as a matter of course, planted themselves at such chinks and crevices as allowed a hearing or a sight of her examination. The scene which they had witnessed, and the language they had heard, had not lessened the interest previously awakened by her misfortunes and helplessness. While they were working in the kitchen, it was very exciting to know that the pretty little girl was within a few yards of them, shut up in a closet with two old men: perhaps the age of the men was an element in their pity, and their tender hearts might have acquired equanimity if the male prisoners had been under thirty;—at all events, the

men were mentioned with evident tokens of disgust, all of which related to their age more than any other quality. At length it was determined that the blind girl should not pass the night with her present companions, and when the serving men came in at seven from stables and ale-houses for their suppers, the girls attacked them on this point, and a very short time afterwards, a deputation of them waited on Annot at her prison door, to invite her to join them at supper.

This invitation was somewhat like Dr. Bonner's to attend a meeting of his spiritual court—a person had perfect liberty to please himself, provided that it pleased him to accept it. Needham was in the midst of a chapter when the girls came to the door, and Annot would have remained to hear the whole of it, besides that she was attached to Needham as one of the same faith as herself; but the girls would take no denial, and she was liberated perforce, and taken into the kitchen to supper. But one ad-

vantage arising from this, besides her own personal liberty, was, that she could assist her fellow-captives in their most immediate embarrassments; for it required very little pressing on her part to induce her friends to carry a joint of meat into the prison, and to put Master Barnard in a condition to enjoy it, by releasing him from the curb on his eating and his eloquence.

Let it not be believed that these girls were not true catholics—let it not be supposed that the zealous Bishop of London had nourished and cherished a houseful of servants who were vile heretics: their present conduct was indeed suspicious, but they were as zealous catholics as Dr. Tonstall or Dr. Bonner. Perhaps they were as conscientious as either of the bishops, in matters of religion, and would have been as ready as any heretic in the land to die for their faith. But they were not bishops: they had no personal interest in establishing a particular kind of faith; and they therefore beheld in men and women not the sup-

porters of an opposite creed who must be put down, but—though churchmen sometimes appeared to forget it—human beings of a nature similar to their own, and who therefore claimed their sympathy. Even Giles, and John, and Richard, and the rest of the men-folk were not quite so hard in the company of the women as in that of the bishops: they would now feel that there was a kind of indistinct pleasure in aiding a little girl in distress, which was an enjoyment they perhaps had never experienced before; and every person, both male and female, in the kitchen, found pleasure in helping the little girl to the nicest things, without remembering at the time that she was a heretic. But when they did remember this terrible blot on her character, their sympathy did not wither, as that beautiful growth of the heart sometimes does beneath religious fervour—the delicate frame, the small regular features, the soft voice and gentle and grateful language of the poor child, went to the hearts of the bishop's

serving-women, and created a tenderness towards her, perhaps not less pleasing to a merciful God than the zeal of their right reverend master. Her very sin became a matter of interest: heresy had been to them a something dark, terrible, but indistinct; it had been seen in high places, and had been rampant in the church; but they had not comprehended it in the exclusiveness of their orthodoxy: it had been to them a something like a murderous traitor sitting on the throne, a devil usurping the worship of the Most High, an uniform overturning of all respect, and a setting up of the very opposite of that which ought to be elevated: it had therefore come to be synonymous with treason, and murder, and blasphemy, and every other horrible crime. But an amazing change was wrought in their hearts by perceiving this terrible crime personified, as it were, in one younger, prettier, and probably more innocent, and gentle, and holy than themselves; and that indistinct feeling of horror which might have

kept them for ever in doubt and fear, was now exchanged for the most simple and prominent of all feminine emotions—curiosity and pity.

The ecclesiastical courts might have learned something important from the cross-examinations of this blind girl in the bishop's kitchen—not severity of logic, not profundity of research, not lucidity of doctrine; they might have learned, what was better, charity, from observing the very simple faith of their victim, and the powerful effect it produced on the hearts of those simple persons that were not tempted to harden their hearts and twist their consciences by the whispering of ambition.

If those serving men and women had had only to deal with their consciences, Annot might have made them all converts, so earnestly did they listen, and so willingly did they assent to all she said. She did not, of course, make a convert, as such a change was never yet effected by argument; they had habit to follow, and interest to look to,

before conscience, and the two former claimed immediate attendance, while the last could be thrust aside for the consideration of a further day. But though she made no convert, she made many friends; there was a positive struggle among the young women to have her for a bed-fellow; and chosen as she was by lot, Annot found her situation much more comfortable than it is probable it would have been with the old men, even putting in half a dozen chapters and a dozen prayers.

Early the next morning, an hour or more before the bishops arose, Annot was summoned to set forth for London, whither she, with Needham and Barnard, had been ordered the day before by Dr. Bonner. Attended by half a dozen of the bishop's servants mounted on good horses, the prisoners set out a-foot. This was a matter of very little consequence, though it might be intended as a punishment, and was directed by that spirit of small persecution which was beginning to prevail through the

land. The two men, probably, walked better than they rode; and even Annot, not much used to long walking, was by no means displeased to walk on this fine summer morning. It was pleasanter to be with friends in this manner than with a rough, scoffing serving-man on horseback—to say nothing of what gave the walk its greatest charm, that the absence of the doctors left them at liberty to converse on what subjects they pleased.

It wanted two hours to noon when the party passed through the gate of Paul's Church Yard, which led to the bishop's palace. This was a very large though plain building, on the Newgate side of the church, so large, indeed, that monarchs with their retinue had been feasted there many days together. But that was in a former reign; for neither the present bishop nor the monarch was much given to sumptuous feasting: probably, however, the present occupation of the palace pleased them quite as much as the other had pleased their prede-

cessors, for it had become the prison as well as the justice-house of suspected heretics.

The serving-men knocked at the door, and, on being admitted, gave up their charge, with very few remarks; and the person who received the prisoners conducted them, one by one, to rooms considerably below the general level, by no means large or dry, throwing them in, and turning a heavy bolt on each of them. This was not hard treatment, but more favourable than many received: Annot, indeed, had been highly favoured the night before, but there were no female servants in this house, and she was now to have the usual treatment of a criminal.

To say that in the dampness and closeness of this cell she was comfortable, and even enraptured by a spiritual enthusiasm, would be to say of her what was not true, though it would have been true of hundreds in her circumstances. She had no enthusiasm beyond her love for her friend and her mother—in that, she was as warm and devoted as

any loving nature could be; but in all other things, she simply followed her conscience, and was content to leave the rest of the world to itself, so that she might be at peace, and have liberty to do what she thought right. Annot had not given her cheek to the smiter: she did not rejoice in her position; but looked on it as on any other danger from which she would be willingly freed, even at a great sacrifice. But this natural sense of the evil of imprisonment—this cringing from the punishment that might be inflicted on her—were by no means incompatible with a firm resolution on all points of conscience and duty. She had had so little to do with the world—she had been so little concerned in the struggles, the caution, the suspicion, the expediency familiar to active people, that she was scarcely aware of the existence of principles which guide the greater part of mankind. Whatever she knew, both of facts and of principles, she had acquired by the operation of her own thoughts, on what she learned from

the Bible; and thus, though she would gladly have been freed from the necessity of bearing testimony to any truth, she thought not of denying or falsifying her convictions, because the possibility of doing so did not arise to her mind.

The executions of the previous day had made some noise in these early times of martyrdom. The pathetic incidents of the ceremony, and the horrors of the late torture, along with the patience of the victims, had been borne by rumour with the utmost rapidity through the country, so that the last life of those five devoted men had scarcely departed, ere Annot had heard a full description of the scene from persons passing by. Knowing therefore how little difference there was between her case and theirs, she had no reason to suppose she might escape their punishment; and thus, whatever she felt or determined, she had before her eyes, as one element in her speculations, the prospect of a terrible death.

There was but one thing for her to do—

that which is generally the last, but ought to be the first resource of misery: she knelt on the stones of her prison, and prayed to Him who is greater than bishops and monarchs.

This peculiar comfort of the persecuted she was in no haste to give up: before she was thoroughly satisfied that she needed no further supplication, the door of her cell was opened, and a man entered, and ordered her to follow him. This she did as well as she was able in a strange house, and when she was bid to stop, she found herself as she supposed, from the breathing of persons around her, in a large chamber in the bishop's palace. This was, indeed, the room where the bishops of London, for the last three centuries, had examined certain classes of offenders, before sending them to the public prisons, or the recognised ecclesiastical courts, from which there was no appeal, save to the king in council. It was, in fact, a kind of private court, in which the bishop exercised absolute power, and

might release or commit prisoners, without referring to the common practice of the law. The place was not fitted up with any of the usual furniture of a court of justice or equity, being merely one of the eating-rooms, which could be very well spared in this huge building, and which had gradually become the room devoted to these purposes. Annot had not long to wait for her purgation, for almost simultaneously with her, entered the bishops of London, Winchester, and Durham, the lord mayor, and half-a-dozen friars and priests, the two doctors, and a couple of lawyers. The two latter couple took their places at the table, and drew pens and paper towards themselves: the more distinguished seated themselves in uncomfortable easy chairs, somewhat removed from the table; the prisoner was brought to the opposite edge of the table, and the examination commenced.

"Annot Palmer," cried one of the doctors, "you are brought before their lordships this day, to make answer to certain charges

laid against you; and whereas you have been already guilty of contumacy in refusing to reply to questions of your diocesan, and to which he hath an abundant right to require your answer, their lordships desire you to remember now the consequence of persisting in your obstinacy."

"You well remember," said the other, "that to refuse replying to a lawful questioner, is to acknowledge guilt, and that you may not question their lordships' authority, without questioning that of the Queen's majesty, which is treason."

"If I be here only to give my opinion as a lawyer on the case," said one of those twain, in a mild and cautious voice; "and not to procure the condemnation of the prisoner, I object, *in limine*, that it is not the practice to caution a prisoner, as though you suppose beforehand she will be obstinate, nor to allude to former obstinacy, unless it appear on the record."

"Yea," cried the other lawyer, "that is true, in respect of lawful public courts; but

this is as it were a court instituted by his lordship, in virtue of his power to put every soul in his diocese to his answer; and therefore any practice of a lawful court may be done away here."

"Nay," cried the other, "as lawyers, all courts are to us alike; nor are we to suffer a breach of the rules framed by the highest reason and necessity, because their lordships, and not judges of the law, sit in the judgment-seat."

"You are somewhat wide of the mark," was the reply; "their lordships may fairly question any person subject to them."

"I crave permission to state, that you mistake the facts," cried the other, with some little vehemence — "if their lordships require a lawful opinion, they will observe the forms commonly observed by courts: if they require only to question the prisoner privately, they need not the aid of lawyers."

"You forget yourself; and I scruple not to say that your language is somewhat un-

mannerly," replied the other lawyer; "their lordships may examine their prisoners as they choose; while they may take the opinion of lawyers on points of law."

"There is no such power given by the law of England," cried the first lawyer; "nor doth it agree with the fundamental principle of law, as you ignorantly pretend. For what saith Aristotle in his poetics——"

"I crave pardon," said Bishop Gardiner, in a winning voice, to the learned gentleman—"I crave pardon for interrupting your eloquence; but I would know whether you have not also authorities to produce somewhat nearer our times than Aristotle."

"Yea, my lord, five hundred if need be," was the bold reply. "I will produce authorities in Greek, from Aristotle; in Latin, from Cicero, downward to Constantinus and Justinian, as well as from the lawyers of the Eastern empire; and from our English laws, from the Normans until now."

"And you," asked Gardiner of the other, "have you no authorities to produce?"

"Yea, my lord, that have I," said he, "and I will engage to produce as many, —yea, five hundred, from Aristotle until now."

"And how long think you it might be before these authorities were recited?" asked Gardiner.

"Why, for mine own part, I could finish by night-fall," replied the lawyer.

"Then, allowing as long for the other gentleman," said Gardiner, with a smiling sneer, "your orations would be concluded at about three hours after midnight: but, as sometimes happeneth, you might not then come to one mind; and, perchance, if we allowed you twenty-four hours, you would not be altogether agreed, and we should yet have to begin our examination. But as we are somewhat straitened for time, and have other prisoners to examine, I trust ye will see good to make no objections to our procedure; but wait until ye are questioned before ye give your opinions."

"Very willingly, my lord."

"Surely it shall be as your lordship pleaseth," replied the two lawyers, seating themselves side by side at the table, in a friendly and confidential manner.

"Annot Palmer," said Gardiner, "you are brought hither before your bishop to be questioned concerning certain heretical and unlawful doctrines which you are suspected to hold. How say you then, will you answer openly such questions as shall be asked, knowing as you do, that the worst answers you can make will be not more dangerous to you than a refusal to answer?"

"Alas, my lord!" replied Annot, "as I have no friend to speak a good word for me, of all the learned men whose voices I hear, it becometh me to be cautious, since it is my duty to preserve my life rather than cast it wilfully away. Yet, my lord, I have never denied to give a clear answer to any question put to me, save where the lives and the consciences of others were brought in question."

"But," cried Bonner, "if ye know of

guilty persons, ye are to declare their guilt."

"Therein I must still be obstinate, if you call that obstinate," said Annot; "for it appeareth to me only just, that if I be allowed to answer for myself, other people should have the like liberty to answer for themselves; for how am I to speak of other people's thoughts? And, surely, my lords, when you seize me in my own home, you take me not to be a witness against others; for how shall a person that is not free bear witness against another?"

The two lawyers cast anxious glances towards the bishops; as if expecting to be called on to declare the custom of the law on this point: but Gardiner required not their opinion, and addressed the prisoner—

"Annot Palmer, weigh carefully what I say to you. Your refusal to make answer to questions is a stale device of heretics, and I myself have heard it a hundred times; but it is of no weight whatever. For supposing that you have friends whom uttering

the truth would injure, what careth the law for your friends, or what knowledge hath the law of them? You are called on to say the truth—you are called on by the law, which we are empowered to administer—if, then, you refuse to answer, it needeth not you should say why you refuse, unless you deny the lawfulness of the court; for otherwise every criminal in the land should plead an excuse, and the law should be held in mockery."

The two lawyers looked up in Bishop Gardiner's face with great admiration of his lucid exposition of the prisoner's duty; but Annot's mind, quickened by danger and rendered clear-sighted by the habit of thought induced by the exclusion of the outward world from her brain, detected a fallacy in Gardiner's reasoning.

"Your lordship is too learned for me to dispute with you," said she; "yet, methinks, I have not offered any excuse for a crime proved on me. There is some difference between a person suspected and a convicted criminal."

"Why, thou peevish wench," cried Bonner, "what sayest thou about convicted criminals?—we can convict thee now, if we list."

"Child," said Tonstall, with his usual kindness, "methinks thou art strangely timorous to utter the truth: thinkest thou we lie in wait, like murderers, to do thee harm? We require only a plain answer to our questions; and if thou hast done wrong, and art sorry for thy offence, thou mayest be readily pardoned."

"Annot Palmer," said Gardiner, with a more dangerous mildness, "you mistake the nature of this examination; but it will do you harm to persist in the mistake. There is, indeed, a difference between a criminal and a suspected person; but there is also a difference between this court and a criminal court. His lordship the Bishop of London hath an undoubted right to question you who are suspected, and to let you go after confession; but if you persist in obstinacy, and leave it to him to prove your guilt, you

will take yourself out of his hands, and deliver yourself to the sheriff to be tried in a public court, from which there would be no appeal."

"I have never denied your right to examine me," replied Annot; "but I will never say what may bring evil on others. As for myself, I will take all risks of a fair examination; for, perchance, if I confess my faults, knowing not what is laid to my charge, I might confess more than you could prove."

"Knowest thou not, then," asked Gardiner, "that it hath been declared unlawful for any man to expound the Scripture until he hath gotten a licence from a bishop now being?"

Annot was about to object to this question, when one of the doctors arose and said—

"My lord, I humbly submit that it is not necessary the prisoner should answer the question: such notoriously is the law, and therefore it is at her own peril if she be ignorant of it."

"Yea, good doctor, such is the custom of the courts," said Gardiner, "but we will go more mildly to work with this prisoner. It seemeth to me, girl, that you shew more natural cunning than learning in your answers; but, prithee, remember what the power is of them that question thee. Say, then, hast thou listened to the preaching of any man not duly licensed by his bishop?"

"My lord," replied Annot, "I humbly submit that I am not bound to answer you, but that if I be accused you are to prove the accusation."

"Remember, girl, if we prove it in your despite, you have no claim on our mercy."

"I will take the chance of that," said Annot—"I cannot be worse in an examination than after a confession."

"Say, at least, have you attended mass on Sundays and holidays, according to law?"

To this question Annot made a similar reply, calling on them, as her simple reason dictated, to prove the charge. Then Dr.

Bonner arose from his chair in great wrath, and cried—

"When will there be an end of this shilly shally? Thinkest thou, wench, we are to wait here till Christmas for thine answer? By the Lord, thou despisest the holy church, and shalt have thy reward. But I will go to work roundly with thee, and put questions that thou shalt answer—articles that contain the whole matter. Now, then, say, ought vows of chastity by men or women to be observed by the laws of God?"

"Yea, my lord," she replied, "every vow ought to be observed that harmeth not our neighbours."

"Very well answered," said Tonstall; "be not in haste, good girl; answer directly to the point, and you shall do well."

"My lords," cried one of the doctors, rising, "I humbly crave permission to say, the answer containeth a doubt. The girl doth not say but a vow of chastity may be hurtful, for she saith only that good vows should be observed."

"But this vow is a good one," cried Bonner, "and therefore is comprised in her answer."

"With submission, my lord, the girl's answer proveth not that she esteemeth the vow a good one. I appeal to the lawyers."

The learned gentlemen arose to dispute on this point, but Gardiner stopped them by taking the part of the doctor, saying—

"The girl hath a mind to deceive us. How say you, then, girl, is it allowed to God's Word that men and women should make vows of chastity?"

"I have never said the contrary," replied Annot, "and if the Word of God alloweth it, I believe it."

"But the Word doth allow it," said Tonstall.

"Yea," cried one of the doctors, "but the girl doth not say so."

"If you have no other reply to make," said Gardiner, "it must be set down that you refuse to answer."

Annot spoke not, and Bonner continued—

"May priests marry by God's law?"

To this question Annot gave a similar reply, and Bonner went to the most important of the six articles, whether in the eucharist the real body of Christ was present, and to this Annot replied—

"My lords and gentlemen, I crave your charity and pity while I speak to you. I cannot tell whether all these things be found in God's Word or no; but if they be, your church believeth them, and is safe, and what matters it whether I believe or no?"

"Yea, but there is no more than one church," said Tonstall, "and when you say, 'your church,' you signify that there is more than one, which is heresy. There is but one church, and its ministers have power and command over all the earth, and it is our lawful duty to guard all people that are faithful, to examine all that are suspected, to punish all that disbelieve."

"Pray, my lord, bear with me," Annot replied; "I am very unlearned, and know not the art of putting words together clerk-

wise; yet will I utter to you all my heart, if you will grant me your patience. I cannot tell whether the person of my Saviour be in the sacrament, nor whether priests may marry, nor whether it is good to make vows of chastity."

"Yea, wench," cried Bonner, "thou knowest whether that be good or no, I warrant me, or I had not found thee at night with a man."

"I thank God, I have more chastity than you have charity!" cried Annot, with a loud voice. "My lords, if you will, you may burn me in a fire this day; it will be less grievous than to be accused publicly of deeds which no maiden in England is more innocent of, or hateth more than I do."

At this reply, Dr. Bonner arose in very fierce wrath, and his doctors also arose, their eyes and mouths open with astonishment at the prisoner's insolence. But Tonstall and Gardiner whispered awhile with their brother, and he sat down in murmuring wrath. Annot was then directed to speak, which she did as follows—

"I know not whether these articles be found in Scripture, nor is it fit a maiden should speak of them, or think of them, for what know I of priests' marriages or men's vows! Perchance if I were blessed with sight, and could walk about free from harm and talk with many people, and learn to read, I should find such things in the Bible. But I am like an infant in knowledge; I know nothing of these great doctrines which are the study of learned men. I know only what hath been read to me in the Bible, that God loveth them that are merciful, and patient, and dutiful, and long suffering, and that he will provide for the orphan that trusteth in him. And I am truly an orphan, good sirs; for some of you did put my father, John Palmer, to death in the Queen's majesty's father's time, because he maintained the pope's supremacy, when some of ye did see fit to make King Harry supreme. My mother, too, is bed-rid—a feeble, helpless woman for whom my hands have laboured early and late from my childhood until now; and there have been times when

I would have given up and sat me down to die for very distress, but for the sweet words in God's book, how he looketh to the orphan. Judge ye then, sirs, if I have had time or means to examine these learned doctrines, or whether I did not well to learn only that which taught me to be contented with poverty, and blindness, and labour, and made me rejoice to feel every day and every hour, that though blind and unlearned, my hands gat food for my mother when she was otherwise helpless."

To this passionate address neither of the bishops replied; Gardiner was really ashamed for the moment at the contrast presented to his mind by Annot of the different causes in support of which he had become a persecutor; Bonner was silent, half through wrath at the girl's boldness in reminding him of former times, and half through want of ready wit to extricate himself from the embarrassment in which she had placed him; Tonstall's heart was touched by the picture the poor girl had presented to him

of her position and her duties, and covered his face with the sleeve of his gown. But the lawyers and doctors had been too much accustomed to discussion to be moved to wrath—too much accustomed to depend on controversy to be put to shame—too much accustomed to the pleadings of criminals and convicted persons, and all the outward expressions of human agony, to feel compassion or tenderness: the business of their lives, the duties of their callings, had begotten an indifference to everything besides argument and law, which perhaps is a more certain cause of cruelty than any active form of misanthropy. They betrayed no kind of emotion; but one of the doctors observing that the bishops were not prepared to speak, kept the business of the day in progress by saying to the prisoner—

"It appeareth then, girl, that if you have erred, your error hath been in fact through ignorance, and as such their lordships will pardon it. But that excuse can serve you no longer: their lordships, who do repre-

sent our holy father the pope, and have care of that portion of the universal church which is in this realm, do declare unto you the necessity of believing thoroughly the doctrines of the which they have questioned you; and you are to declare at once whether you do receive them as articles of faith."

"Good sir," cried Annot, "can I believe what you tell me, or what I list, in a moment? I mind well how long it was in my younger days before I believed thoroughly in the blessed sacrifice of my Saviour. The awful mystery of that atonement, though very welcome to the mind of a poor creature who had nothing to trust to in the world, won my belief only after very long thought, and much hearing of the Holy Word; and can I believe all you tell me in a moment?"

"And what more dost thou require?" replied Bonner, recovered from his embarrassment; "hast thou not the command of thy bishop?—a good whipping, I warrant, would make thee believe fast enough."

"I think not, my lord," Annot replied; "if you torture me beyond my poor strength to endure it, you may make me a liar; but I think I shall not believe any more for what my body may endure."

"We shall soon see that!' cried Bonner. "By the Lord, here is too much of this!"

The bishop here rang a hand-bell which was lying on the table, when a couple of servant-men appeared, to whom he cried—

"Here, Giles! pluck me yonder girl's gown and corset from her back, and give her a sound whipping."

But before the men could advance a foot towards her, Bishop Tonstall arose from his chair, trembling and feeble, yet firm in manner, though his wrinkled face was expressive of deep agitation.

"What, brother Bonner!" cried he; "art thou in earnest? wouldst thou lay a whip on yonder child—one that should rather be put into the bosom of a gentle woman than under the hands of your servant!"

"Yea, that would I!" cried Bonner. "Is

it not a vile heretic that avoweth her guilt here before us, and refuseth the faith that is offered to her?"

"For shame, brother Bonner!" cried Tonstall, tears running down his cheeks—"was it ever heard in England that young maidens like this were whipped?—and would you, would you—nay, I cannot believe it—would you lay bare to the eyes of all us men the pure bosom of an English maiden? it is an outrage that every gentleman would prevent or revenge; and think you we put off the noblest part of a gentleman's spirit when we become churchmen? It must not be—it shall not be!"

"And who shall say me nay?" shouted Bonner. "This is mine own court, not yours; you shall do as you will in Durham, and I will do as I will in London."

"I forbid you not in anything that is lawful," cried Tonstall; "but as I have sat here with you, I will not give my sanction to this thing; and if you persist in this deed, which would be fitter for the lasci-

vious eyes of an heathen adulterer than a Christian bishop, I will report the deed in Rome."

"And who careth for thy reports?" cried Bonner. "It is well known that thou art no firm friend of the church, and so it is known at Rome."

"Who dares affirm that falsehood of a man that for eighty years hath stood by the church, as firm as the best, in all changes?"

"That do I. I have thine own letter to Sir Thomas More, giving him permission to read heretical books in Henry's time."

"Yea, Dr. Bonner, when thou wast in arms, I gave him permission, as a learned man, that he might reply to them; and but for that permission he had not glorified the church by martyrdom. You did never hear that I permitted heretical books to the ignorant poor folk of my diocese."

"You are learned, I know, Dr. Tonstall," cried Bonner, "but when Tindall sent his translation of the Bible into England from Holland, which was full of blunders, did you

not buy them all, so that your money enabled him to put forth another edition, and paid him well for all his expenses?"

"Yea, I did so," replied Tonstall; "and therein I shewed myself an ignorant man. But if in my simplicity I did err, it was an error of my judgment, and rather would I be deceived daily, than bear such a constant guard and suspicion as never to be deceived; or practise the cruelty which disgraces mankind, under cover of zeal for the church. But know, Dr. Bonner, I did confess my fault unto our holy Father, and was pardoned; but you dare not confess your present intention."

"Yea, I dare and will perform it!" cried Bonner, furiously. "Methinks I should be a fool to be guided by your erring judgment, as you call it. If your judgment cannot guide yourself, it shall not me. Go, thou, and whip me well yonder peevish wench!"

It has been mentioned that a company of priests stood behind the bishops, to observe the examination. These were not attached

in any way to the bishop's household, or they would have gone into the gallery to listen, but were priests of London churches, who came merely to witness these interesting ceremonies, without being officially engaged in them. As the bishop uttered the last words, the audience was amazed at hearing from a member of this body, in a very distinct manner, the words—

"O Lord, O Lord!—what fools St. Paul, and St. John, and all the apostles were!"

This exclamation turned the bishop's wrath in a moment away from Annot, and he looked round on the company of priests in a frightful state of astonishment and rage. There was little need of strict examination to get at the offender; for the body of priests parted in the midst, every one in natural horror endeavouring to get as far as possible from the offender, so that he was left standing alone.

"Now, man," cried Bonner; "what meanest thou by thy saying that St. Paul and all the blessed apostles were fools?"

"I meant no harm, good sir," cried the

priest, "but I did always hear that St. Paul and the rest of the apostles did make good catholics of people by often preaching and long praying, whilst you do it by whipping and burning,—and, by my soul, you go the easiest way to work! It taketh little labour to burn a man or woman, but there is some toil in preaching and praying; and, truly, I think ye wish to avoid it, for I never heard that ye were great lovers of preaching; and if ye pray it is in secret, and no soul is the wiser for it."

"What knavish priest art thou that babblest this ribaldry?" cried Bonner, his companions standing mute with amazement —"Come forth, and let me look on thee!"

"Ye may look on me as long as ye list," replied the man, coming forward, "ye will find no harm in me, I warrant. I thank God, I do come of as honest parents as any of you, and have always been of the faith of the King and Queen."

"Of the church, you would say," suggested Tonstall.

"Not so," was the reply; "that would shew little wisdom in me; for when all you great bishops did follow the King, and cried —'Down with popes, and up with King Henry!' I had shewn little cunning not to follow so good example."

"By God, thou art more knave than fool!" cried Bonner. "Thou hast a meaning in thy bitter words which I will have out of thee, if I burn it out!"

"Alack, master!" cried the other, in great perturbation—"what good would you get by burning a poor fellow like me? I warrant ye had better leave the church to shift for herself, or, by 'r Lady, she will soon go without any followers, and be no church at all!"

"What meanest thou by that?" cried one of the doctors.

"Why, by my faith, ye holy divines of the true church of Rome do burn all the Lutherans ye catch, and surely the Lutherans will find fire enow for us true papists; and if each side destroy the other,

why it will be like the old story of fire and water."

"What story, villain?" shouted Bonner.

"The story of fire and water," was the reply. "You must know, there was a handful of fire and a cup of water, and they were put together. Now what came on't? Why, by 'r Lady, there was no fire left to make a toast, nor so much water as would mix with a cup of wine—nothing but a little mud."

"And what knave art thou that pratest to us of toasts and wine?" exclaimed Bonner. "Thou art no priest, I'll be sworn—or, if thou art, a false one. Pluck off his hat and cloak there!"

This command was instantly obeyed, and the man stood before the dignitaries freed from his priestly habit, displaying a well-knit body, arrayed in the common doublet and hose of a working man, and without the shaven crown of priesthood. This discovery somewhat amazed all present; and Bonner ordered the man to take his place

by the prisoner, which was done with great alacrity. He was then about to question him on the strange but heavy crime he had committed in personating a minister of the church, but was interrupted by the entrance of unexpected and unwelcome visitors.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANNE GRANVILLE'S friendship was a sentiment, not an idea—a great faculty or principle of her own heart, to be cherished out of the instinct of self-love—not a part of her conduct, to be regulated by opinion. Many of the young and gay, and even of the affectionate of the great world, might have considered that they had done their duty when they had arisen at an unusual hour of the morning, and ridden, unguarded, so far as Fulham, to implore the pardon of a friend, since indifference could no longer be imputed, nor any point of neglect ad-

duced: but Anne thought not of the world's opinion, of decency, or propriety—she thought only of a dear friend; nor felt other than that while the remotest chance remained of saving her, she could not rest while it was untried.

It was the first time she had ever been beyond the park-wall at early morn—the first time she had gone a dozen miles, unattended by a gentleman of her family, at any hour. There were reasons, perhaps, why she would not have chosen to meet certain friends and relations, while travelling, attended by a single servant: but the failure of her attempt, the uselessness of the unusual adventure, by no means satisfied her that she had done all her duty, and might be at rest—it only incited her to further exertions.

When she returned from Fulham, her father was at home, and she immediately went to his chamber. Sir Thomas arose at his daughter's entrance, and walked across the room to meet her, kissed her cheek, and paid her the compliments of the

day. His good taste accustomed her betimes to rather more than the common ceremony, and to the somewhat formal respect of gentlemen, which her birth gave her the right to look for. With some little portion of this formality, the knight conducted his daughter to the table at which he had been sitting, and seated himself only when he had seen her seated."

"I learn that you have been a journey this morning, Mistress Anne," said her father, smiling—"an uncommon thing for so notable a housewife."

"Yes, dear father," she replied, "I have been to Fulham."

"To Fulham, Anne! Not to see the mild Bishop of London, I suppose?" the Knight replied, with a considerable degree of surprise; which was not abated by her saying, laconically, that he had rightly guessed the object of her journey.

"You were from home, dear father, when I arose," she continued, "or I had prayed you to accompany me——"

"Very glad am I, Anne, that I was," interrupted Sir Thomas; "for I should have refused your prayer—the first time in our lives, I think."

"I am glad, too, father; for I partly know your reason. But you must learn the cause of this unusual proceeding: you know Widow Palmer at the Cross—she whose husband was burned in Henry's time for denying his supremacy? You probably remember their child—a girl—a little blind girl?"

"I have seen her along with you, Anne."

"This poor girl, whom I dearly love, was seized by Dr. Bonner yesternoon, and carried to Fulham, whither I went to pray for her release."

"Ha! and did you say that I knew these Palmers?"

"Pardon me, father, I did; but, trust me, not in a manner to compromise your dignity or mine. I discovered that you were at variance with the bishop, and I gave him not power to glory in refusing our request."

"And what hath this girl done?"

"She is called an heretic; but I utterly disbelieve it, for sure am I that no worthier child liveth in this world. Blind and tender as she is, she hath laboured day by day, and by night too, from her childhood up till now, and all to feed her crippled and bed-rid mother, whose temper affliction hath soured; and certain am I that nought but the deepest and holiest sense of duty and child-like love could have made her what she hath ever been, since she had neither the hope of hoarding riches, nor the desire to have her virtue seen, to make her so full of goodness as she is."

"And when knew you that the girl was taken?"

"Last evening."

The knight paused awhile, as if reflecting; then said—"You were missing in the hall at candle-lighting, and were no more seen, so that I had to perform all the duties of the host."

"Yes, father, it was then I learned what I have told you."

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girl be a heretic, Harry could do no other; only I love not to see a gentleman meddle with such things. I suppose, then, you and Harry are striving to set the girl free? But enough of this—where shall we ride or walk this morning?"

"Pardon me, father," replied Anne, "if I desire you to listen to me a little longer on this subject. Master Markham is, I doubt not, labouring heartily to free Annot, as I am; but we are not labouring in concert. I spoke my mind somewhat warmly to Master Markham last evening, and therefore he left our house."

"What, Anne! have you quarrelled with Harry Markham? Nay, that must not be, Anne—I must have you friends again. And have you not seen him since last evening?"

"Yes, dear father, I saw him at Fulham this morning; but he was with the bishop, and his lordship was somewhat rude, and we—we—did not speak. But my dear father will oblige his daughter very greatly by not striving to make us friends—friends

we are—yes, surely I wish no harm to Master Markham, but I mean—I would say—certain words passed between Master Markham and me, that he will not come here again if you invite him not; and, though I wish him no harm, I could not welcome him unless you command me, and that command would be the first from the lips of my dear father that I loved not to obey."

"Well, child," replied her father, smiling, "I understand but little of this; but since you wish me to be uncourteous to Harry——"

"Not uncourteous, father; I do but ask you to suffer Master Markham to follow his own mind in this matter, and I will be well satisfied. I should be very sorry—I should shut myself a prisoner in my chamber if Master Markham came here at your invitation."

"Well, as you like, child. If Harry come to Clawton, I will not treat him churlishly; but I shall not invite him, since such is your wish. But now to my question: will you walk or ride, and whither?"

"Bear with me, dear father," said Anne, with some little hesitation; "bear with me while I say what may sound harsh in your ears at first, but will I trust be not so unpleasing when you have considered the matter. My poor Annot hath been sent to Paul's Church in London, this morning, for further examination, and you know, dear father, what such an examination may be. I will not say of the Bishop of London more than I hear from true friends of the church; but all those who have spoken to me say, that however sincere the zeal with which he sets about the re-establishing the faith of our most holy church, he is a violent and somewhat cruel man, that careth little how the bodies of men are tortured. We are all, perhaps, too indifferent to the tortures which our own bodies bear not, or our own eyes witness not; we seldom task our memory or our fancy to picture the misery which we hear of as inflicted on strangers; we rather thrust it aside to avoid pain than contemplate it until we can comprehend it

and pity it. And here, when it is a bish[illegible]h of the true church lawfully appointed, i[illegible] flicting torments on heretics to uphold [illegible]h church which is attacked, we can with [illegible]if. ficulty suppose severity too great, or a[illegible]y torture undeserved. But, my dear father, all these considerations become of small importance when one knoweth that the person so tortured is one's dearly beloved friend—when that friend is one that in all respects hath fulfilled the duties of her station. Yea, my dear father," Anne cried, in an elevated voice, tears gushing from her eyes, "this friend hath done more than her duty, if such may be: she, in the perfectness of her humility and patience, hath given me many a lesson which forced itself into my heart, and with so indulgent a parent as I possess, I had become proud and arrogant but for the gentle words of my dear friend, which her own life did practically illustrate and beautify."

"Dearest!" cried the Knight, gently drawing the animated face of his daughter

to his bosom, "I knew not that you loved so fondly this poor girl: and what wish you to do to procure her liberation?"

"I wish to see her," cried Anne; "I wish to go to Paul's Church, and talk with her; I would go into her prison with her, and watch over her, if I might be permitted —yes, willingly would I lay by these silken robes, and don the homespun of a handmaiden to watch over her I love. But if she be a prisoner, that may not be; yet must I, dear father, go to Paul's Church to see what can be done; and you, dear father, I would entreat to accompany me."

"I—I go to Paul's Church!" cried Sir Thomas; "my dear child, you know not what you ask—I cannot indeed——"

"Stay a moment, I pray you, and pardon my boldness," cried Anne; "I can believe that the bishop hath insulted you as he hath me——"

"You, Anne! hath Bonner dared——"

"Dr. Bonner hath not the generous spirit of a true English gentleman, nor

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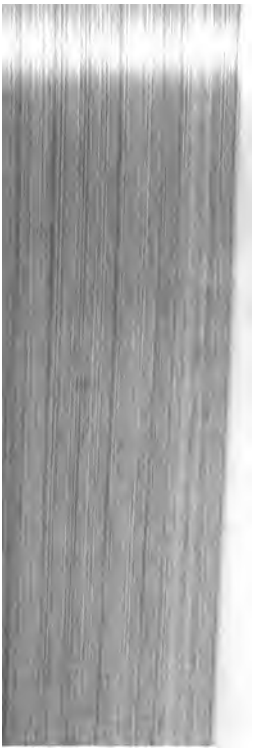
a life of persecution! Would to God her councillors were of another kind, for then would I throw myself at her feet, and obtain the justice I seek! but now — oh, father, you may knock at the door of her palace, with the confidence of one that hath fought boldly for the crown which she weareth, and you will be met by a Spanish servant who will take your name, and in a month, perhaps, you will be told that the Queen's majesty hath too many affairs on hand to grant you an audience: but long before that time, my dear friend will be beyond the reach of everything but my sorrow."

The Knight gave no reply to these words, though his daughter paused—he knew their truth, though he hesitated at granting the alternative; but Anne continued—

"My dear father, you must go with me to Paul's Church. I say must—the first time I ever said the word to you; but I say it in behalf of my friend, who standeth even next to you in my



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through my love. Consider, dear father, in what solitude my life hath passed, compared with that of other maidens. My mother dying in my early years, and leaving me neither sister nor brother, I have lived with you without those home-friends that many ladies enjoy. I might have sought friends, and found such as are common, if I would; but I cared not for them, while I felt that my father loved me, and was happy in my love. This girl alone, growing up at our own door, did I love for her sweet virtues: she hath been to me in the place of all the friends that other ladies love; and surely, dear father, she shall not be left to perish because she is poor, and therefore dependent on my friendship. No: honour as well as friendship is engaged to defend her; but more than that, if any motive can take precedence of honour, our happiness is engaged; for, trust my word, beloved father, your daughter will never be cheerful—she will never hold up her head more, if her friend, so dearly prized, be taken from her."

"Dear child," replied her father, pressing her hand, "there needeth not this passionate persuasion, if the thing be proper to do. But if this girl have unhappily proved a heretic, I see not how I can interfere; and if she be not, how can I beg her pardon of Dr. Bonner, when, if my head were on the block, I would not win a pardon by craving it of him!"

"I care not what she be," cried Anne, "for she is my friend. Oh, dearest father, when my beloved friend is in extreme danger, am I to stop and question her faith before I strive to release her? No, no! let me see her safe in my arms, and I will question her, and have twenty priests about her if need be. I believe not that she is a heretic; but if she be, she must be saved before I give her up. I am not to make my suspicions a reason for deserting her. I loved her, suspecting no heresy in her sweet mind; and she must be free before I ask a question concerning her faith. Let me see my friend beyond the necessity of my assistance, and

I will find whether I have been mistaken in her. But, consider, father, that to be of the true church is no difficult thing, nor of itself sufficient to make people worthy of our love, since we see thousands and thousands around us that we love not, nor respect, though they be members of the church; but this girl I love, and that love would stand in the place of all virtues, even if she had them not, as she hath. Yet, my dear father, I crave of you nothing contrary to your honour; for that is dearer to me than the life of any one. I ask you not to humble yourself before this cruel and brutal bishop—I ask you only so far to conceal your dislike as to be present at the examination, by which means you will probably protect my friend from violence."

"But how am I to be present, Anne? Am I to go to the bishop, and beg him to admit me, and be refused with insult?"

"Not so, father; we can mount our horses, and ride to Paul's, to visit our old friend, Dr. Feckenham, the dean; and he, on hearing your wish, would, undoubtedly, give

you admittance. Indeed, father, Dr. Bonner himself could not object to your entrance without laying himself open to suspicion for it would be somewhat strange if a gentleman so loyal to his sovereign and the church, should be denied admittance to any court in this realm."

"Well," replied Sir Thomas, "to please you, I will do what you ask. We will ride together to the dean's house: but expect no more than you have desired. The dean will admit us; and, once admitted, I will not be thrust back again until I choose to go. But think not, Anne, that I will cast myself at this bishop's knees to ask a favour of him."

"I desire no more, dear father," cried Anne, as she threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him.

Anne suffered no delay to take place after this promise had been gained; horses in a few minutes were brought to the door, and father and daughter were immediately afterwards on the road to London.

There was also but little delay at the

dean's house, in Paul's Church Yard. Dr. Feckenham welcomed his friends, but apologized for inability to remain with them, as he was summoned to an examination of criminals in the bishop's court, when the knight offered to accompany him, which was assented to as a matter of course, and in a few seconds they found themselves in this important court.

These were the persons that interrupted the examination, as related in the conclusion of the last chapter, when the Bishop of London had made a prisoner of the man that had entered the room in the garb of a priest. The thing to be first noticed after their entrance was, that Anne walked directly to the female prisoner, laid one hand on her friend's hand that rested on the table, and put the other on her shoulder. Before that hand could creep round the little neck—at the first touch, Annot's heart bounded with the inspiriting knowledge of the presence of the adored lady, and she turned round to sink on her knees in humble gratitude, but

was caught in the embrace of equal and most passionate friendship. There was something in that clasping and clinging embrace which Dr. Bonner could not touch—a rapture that all the tyrants and all the tortures of the world could not prevent, nor sully, nor terminate—it was a joy, an exultation, inexpressibly sweet at the moment—one that must be dearly remembered in the midst of flames—one that must be clung to through a severer trial—the coldness generated by a long life. Tears of gratitude as boundless as her love poured down the cheeks of Annot into her white and swelling bosom; Anne also wept; though ashamed at first to weep in the presence of a brutal persecutor, friendship was more powerful in her bosom than the pride which sometimes appeared almighty; and she wept like a poor cottage-girl, utterly regardless of Bonner and Gardiner, and every one besides the dear girl she held in her trembling arms.

No words of their love passed between them: its embraces and its tears were full

of language, and required not more vulgar accents to communicate its raptures and agonies. The first words that were intelligible from their trembling lips began with Annot, and referred to her mother. To these, Anne had the pleasure of replying, that old Margery, her mother's gossip, had been with her ever since, and would never leave her, and that they were plentifully provided with everything necessary for their comfort. Then was there another embrace of grateful love on one side—of gratified love on the other.

But these raptures endured not many seconds. Dr. Bonner's court was not a place dedicated to the tender emotions, nor was he formed by nature to preside over an exhibition of them. While the two maidens were indulging the sorrowful rapture of this meeting, Dr. Bonner was scanning the faces of the Granvilles and Dr. Feckenham, with a countenance portentous of an outbreak. He was doubtless very glad to see those that he esteemed his enemies come of their

own accord within the circle where he was absolute: it was the most exquisite, because the most malignant, pleasure, to know they desired to ask him a favour, which he would never grant; and that he could abuse them as much as he chose, without fear of ill-consequence to himself. He would most certainly have addressed Sir Thomas Granville with extreme civility of words, and bitter, mocking irony of manner, but from one or two little considerations of self-interest that forced themselves on his attention. Dr. Feckenham, the dean, a man of great importance in the diocese of London, was evidently a close personal friend of the Granvilles. Tonstall had taken his cap from his bald head in respect to the knight, and Gardiner had arisen from his seat to pay his duty to the knight and the lady; and not only was the opinion of the lord chancellor, both from his station and character, to be considered of importance, but even that of Tonstall Bonner knew to be of great weight with all classes of people,

though ten minutes before he had quarrelled with him for opposing the indecency of his rage. Bonner, therefore, though he allowed not a minute for the condolence of friendship, dared not interrupt it by violence or insolence; but was constrained to use only legitimate and lawful means—namely, to continue the examination of the prisoners.

It will be remembered, that a moment before the Granvilles entered, the Bishop had put at Annot's side the man who had gained admittance to the court under the guise of a priest. This man was now directed to give an account of himself; but though he had appeared voluble enough before, and exceedingly ready to deliver such opinions as he had, he made no reply to the bishop's order. He was commanded a second time, both by Bonner and Gardiner, but he had taken Annot's hand in his, and continued to look in her face, without noticing what was said to him. At length, Bonner, in a furious rage, spoke so loudly, and threatened so severely, that the man

was compelled to notice it, and he replied, with great simplicity and earnestness: "Since ye have put me along with Annot here, I shall do as she does. If ye want to know who I am, ye must find it as ye may."

"Thou villanous knave!" cried Bonner, but he paused when he beheld Sir Thomas Granville step towards the man, and lay his hand on his collar. The man kept his face concealed from the knight as well as he could, but that gentleman's vigorous arm readily turned him about, when he exclaimed—

"Ralph, thou villain! what dost thou here?"

"I cry you mercy!" whimpered the fool, falling on his knees—"I meant no harm."

"What knave's trick art thou on?" cried the knight.

"No knave's trick, as I am a living—fool," replied the other—"I did only come to look for our Annot."

"Get thee home, sirrah, and prepare thy back for a whipping."

The fool, in obedience to this command, was running away, when the bishop cried—

"Heyday, my master, whither runnest thou? Stand, and answer our questions, or I will lay thee by the legs!"

"The man, my lords," replied Sir Thomas, "is only a poor silly fool, that hath escaped from my house."

"A fool! a fool!" cried Bonner; "by the Lord, the same that did waylay me at Islington two nights back, and befouled me with his bitter tongue! Ho-ho, my master! I've got you, have I! Now will I know whether thou beest fool or knave, and who hath set thee on me!"

"I am no knave," said Ralph, stoutly—"I am a right honest fool, as forty whippings a month do witness: perchance, if I had been a knave, I had been a knight or a bishop by now."

"I think, my lord," whispered Gardiner, "it will be well to use the man as a true fool. These fellows say bitter words that gentlemen cannot resent."

"Yea, but I will know who set him on. I grievously suspect——"

"Nobody did set me on!" cried Ralph; "and it was you that waylaid me the other night at Islington, for if you had passed the porch without speaking, by the Lord, you should have gone away with my good will!"

"Silence, Ralph!" cried the knight; then turning towards the bishops, he continued—"You hear, my lord, the folly of the poor man, which shall be rewarded with a whipping."

"Yea, it shall!" cried Bonner. "Giles, lay thy whip smartly over the villain's shoulders."

But this Sir Thomas could not permit. He put himself before Ralph, saying—"No, my lord, it is not the custom for gentlemen to allow their servants to be beaten by strange hands. I will take care that the man hath a whipping, but no person shall beat him, save as I command. Rather would I, my lords, that the fool were examined in a lawful manner, if you think an

examination of him will not sound like mummery in the ears of the people. But these lawyers will say that a judge hath not power to whip a person in open court who is only suspected."

"True it is," whispered Gardiner to his friend; "you are not to whip a man that is only suspected; but you can sentence him to a whipping, and cause it to be administered at once; so that there is only an apparent—no real difference. Yet, my good brother of London, I would not have you touch a silly fool when there are so many men of learning that go free; for be sure that such a thing would be turned into a filthy song before twenty-four hours, and sung in every ale-house in the realm before a month.

This suggestion was worthy of consideration. Bonner was old enough to remember the satires of Skelton on Cardinal Wolsey, which, before they were printed, found their way into everybody's mind, and fixed themselves on the memory. He knew well with what bitter agony Wolsey had heard these

lying and furious invectives—agony which had made him stoop from his splendid elevation, to fight with the author as an equal, and whom he would have found means to put to death but that the poor laureate got into the sanctuary of the Almonry. Conflicts of a more awful kind Bonner could venture on: he had sufficient of the English blood in him to be fearless and bold, and even cheerful in danger of any magnitude, whether he were right or wrong; but he feared poets more than warriors, and dared not to be the subject of a Christmas mummery or Whitsun spectacle of the Fat Bishop and the Fool. Turning, therefore, towards Ralph with a most threatening look, he made a long and vituperative oration on the enormity of his offence, and the terrible punishment he would receive if he played off another of his tricks; after which he ordered Sir Thomas to take away his fool, promising him, that if the man ever came in his way again for a similar offence, he would have him whipped by the public executioner.

This command Ralph obeyed with great

alacrity: he slunk away to the other side of the room, and squatted on the floor behind his master, very much delighted at his escape from the probable whipping.

Bonner then, turning to the prisoner, ordered one of his men to remove the woman who was standing at her side; and Anne Granville, to whom the insult was addressed, moved away immediately to the side of her father. This was the first moment that the agitated joy of this meeting with her friend in trouble had allowed her to look around the room—her whole mind had been engaged in answering Annot's questions, and suggesting comfort to her, though she appeared not at all wanting in that feeling, however little her circumstances appeared likely to create it. Anne did now look round and examine the groupes of persons: perhaps a very close observer might have detected a faint sigh when the examination was over. She, however, soon found her interest entirely engrossed by persons present; for Bonner, after whispering with Gardiner, said to the

prisoner, "Annot Palmer, ye say that ye will not believe rightly though ye be whipped for it, which shall be presently tried, if ye prove not conformable. But, out of our charity towards you, we ask again whether you will declare your opinions on the matters put to you, or whether you will be condemned for contumacy."

"I have answered you fully," Annot replied, "saving where others are concerned."

"Why, thou hast answered nothing to the purpose!" Bonner cried.

"To what purpose am I to answer?" Annot replied. "I have told you all that I know. If you ask me whether I will obey the Queen, or submit me to the laws, or be dutiful to a parent, I can tell you plainly; but if you ask me concerning priests' vows, I cannot tell, for I know not what to say."

"Thou dost not, eh!—well, well, we shall see! Give us then a plain answer to this—When didst thou last confess to a priest, or wast at mass?"

"I pray you, my lords, seek not to entrap

me. By asking me this, you shew that you esteem it a crime. You should, therefore, be able to prove it; and surely I am not to condemn myself."

"Thou art a fool—a stubborn fool!" cried the impatient bishop; "but thou shalt have thy petition granted, and more than thou bargainedst for."

He now whispered to a serving-man, who went out, and returned after a few minutes, accompanied by Barker. Bonner, during this absence, had been conversing in whispers with the doctors and lawyers, their subject being a very pleasant one, as might be told by the rough smiles that rolled over his large face, and the facetious merriment with which he spoke.

"Heyday, Master Barker!" cried he, "surely, I fear something hath befallen thee since the morning, for thou seemest rather loose on thy legs."

"Yea, my lord, I thank you for it," Barker replied, very calmly, "I love the free air too well to enjoy that of your coal-

house; and I have so long used my hands and feet as I list, that the fastening of them two hours in your stocks hath somewhat crippled me."

"Well, man," said Bonner, "they shall be the best hours of thy life if thou make thee conformable to the law: if not, that pain thou shalt esteem as pleasure for the greater thou shalt have to bear. We are heartily tired of the trouble heretics give us, and glad would we be to pardon them on their repentance. Speak then, Barker, truly, to what shall be asked of thee. Dost thou use the mass or the Common Prayer in thy church at Islington? Dost thou see that thy people do come to confession at least once in a month?—Nay, by the Lord, man, never think over thy reply!" cried the Bishop, as Barker paused to reflect on the probable consequences of his answering—"for if thou dost not say yes, or no, to what I ask, thy limbs shall suffer for it."

"I care not for my limbs' pleasure," replied Barker, submissively. "When I do

livered myself into your hands, I knew all that I brought on myself; and where I alone am concerned, ye shall know the truth of my mind. I did never use the mass, nor did I ever confess man or woman, nor will do so."

"It is well, Barker," replied Bonner, "thou hast answered to the point; and thou, Annot Palmer, stand back awhile. Hast thou, Barker, ministered thyself at Islington Church for some time past?"

"Yea, my lord, every Sabbath for four years."

"It is well: ye lawyers, have you written these answers?"

"Yea, my lord, verbatim."

"Well—very well!" cried the bishop, rubbing his plump hands together. "Now, Barker, tell me, dost preach in by-places to poor people?"

"No, my lord, why should I? The church is open to them."

"Dost thou explain Scripture to them in the church, or at other places?"

"If you are striving to discover the supposed faults of my friends, I cannot answer you."

"Yea, man, thou canst and must," said one of the doctors; "thou art to say the truth, and not regard the use that may be made of it."

"You shall excuse me, sir," replied Barker.

"But thou shalt not be excused, Barker," cried Bonner; "thou shalt reply. Hast thou expounded the Scripture to yonder girl, Annot Palmer?—What! wilt not answer? Say then, hast thou read Scripture, and expounded it in thy fashion in Thames Street, in this city."

"I have, my lord; I doubt not you can prove it," replied Barker; "but whoever hath informed you must know that in so doing——"

"Nay, good man," said one of the doctors, "thou art not to excuse thyself—thou art not on thy trial as yet, but only examined; and thou art to answer all questions,

yea or nay. The question now is—Hast thou expounded the Bible to Annot Palmer?'

To this question Barker refused to reply; when Gardiner whispering to Bonner, the latter beckoned to the lawyers and doctors, and they consulted together for a little time.

"Is this man a priest?" asked Gardiner.

"Yea, a devil's priest," replied Bonner; "it is one of Ridley's ministers."

"Then, not being lawfully ordained by a bishop of the true church, you will not use the form of priestly degradation?"

"Assuredly not, my lord," quoth a lawyer. "The man must be examined as a simple heretic."

"Nay, not as a heretic;" said the other lawyer, "that remaineth to be proved."

"But I will prove," cried the first, "by three syllogisms, that the man is a heretic. First, major——"

"Spare your learning awhile," suggested Gardiner; "we must prove the guilt on the man himself."

"Your lordship will observe," said one of the doctors, "that the girl's guilt is fully proved; and that she needeth no further examination unless you see good to apply torture to make her forsake her opinions. We had it from her mouth yesterday that she hath attended her parish church every Sunday, which is Islington church, and the man declareth that no mass or confession hath been used there these four years; wherefore the girl hath not attended mass or confession these four years."

"Non sequitur," cried the objecting lawyer—"thou provest that the girl hath been where no mass was celebrated; not that she hath not been where mass was."

"Well, are not both unlawful?" asked a doctor.

"Yes, undoubtedly," was the reply.

"That is all we need," said the doctor. "This man hath preached without licence, against express command; he hath publicly expounded the Scriptures; he hath not confessed—the girl is equally guilty—needeth

there more proof? May they not, on their own confession, be given to the sheriff for execution?"

"Truly, they may," cried both lawyers.

All this time the venerable Tonstall had sat somewhat removed from Bonner, and a tear stole down his wrinkled face in grief at the indignity with which he had been treated: but the doctors and Bonner knew the influence of his character too well to allow him to depart in this manner. They also knew that capital punishment for religion had become rare of late years, and that the unanimous vote of three bishops would go much farther than a mere majority, in reconciling the people to it, even though the minority had not been so venerated; and the Bishop, with the grace of a bear, had contrived to bring Tonstall within hearing of this discussion. Tonstall was never backward in speaking to such persons as were present: he had been in authority while they were in arms, and he naturally assumed a kind of superiority with them because he

had watched them growing up from childhood. He was about to object to this hasty decision of death, when Gardiner, observing the expression of his countenance, remarked,—

"No, brother Bonner, we may not be so hasty in giving sentence. It is true, both man and woman have done wrong. But the church loveth to gain a good child rather than destroy an evil one; wherefore, it will be well to reason with them awhile, and bring them over from their unholy opinions."

The lawyers and doctors then returned to their places, and the three bishops seated themselves.

"Master Barker," said Gardiner, "sorry am I that a man with some learning, as I suppose you have, should so obstinately transgress the law. Know you not the punishment that may be inflicted on you?"

"I know it well, my lord, but I have answered to this matter before. My lords, I am about thirty years of age, and from my

third to my twenty-eighth, popedom had been held and preached to be most intolerable tyranny. Now, my lords, at three years of age I could hardly have learned so much of the Romish faith as your lordships, who were brought up when that was not held tyranny. I was educated in the reformed doctrines, and in my mature years I was devoted to the ministry of Christ by Cranmer and Ridley, two learned men, who were acknowledged lawful bishops, and whose opinions I loved to follow. Now, my lords, is it to be thought that I, a minister of the gospel so appointed and so taught, should change my faith because another faith was held by our gracious Queen, or that I should flee and forsake my flock because danger was threatened?"

"Thou hast said all that before," cried Bonner; "tell a new tale, wilt?"

"No, my lord; I tell the truth of the matter, and it needs not to be altered, for you have never answered it."

"Thou hast less learning than I thought,"

cried Gardiner. "Knowest thou not that a church cannot stand when bishops are not acknowledged, to overlook the clergy? How, then, couldst thou presume to preach, and hold thy parish of Islington, when thou didst not acknowledge the authority of those set over thee?"

"I have done my duty to those that appointed me," cried Barker, "and let the blame rest on those that did not theirs. I did never acknowledge other bishop than Dr. Ridley, and his commands most gladly would I have obeyed. In the spirit of his faith have I governed my poor flock, nor did I ever, nor will I ever, as a minister of the gospel, acknowledge a bishop that loveth not that righteous man."

"And so thou settest thyself above the law?"

"Not so. The law that troubleth me is a new one; and Hooper and Taylor were imprisoned a year against the laws, and they were punished by a law made for the express purpose—a thing not known in Christ-

endom. I did never make my poor house at Islington a walled castle to beat off mine enemies. I did only hold the trust placed in me, and I have looked often to be thrust forth; but, believing myself lawfully appointed, I did not ask for a new licence to preach, which I could only gain from those that had put my bishop in a prison; nor would I forsake my beloved people because I had fallen into a time of trouble."

"This," replied Gardiner, modestly, and glancing at the same time towards the Granvilles—"this is my lord of London's court, and not mine; so that my words have little weight, and must be held as those of any common man, rather than those of a judge. Yet, Master Barker, I scruple not to say that you are altogether wrong, and that if you have not been answered, it is not because there was difficulty. You say of Dr. Ridley, he is your bishop, and you know none other: he hath been discarded, and you acknowledge not his successor. What, then, do you say, from the time of

Christ until now, there hath been only one bishop of this see, and that one Dr. Ridley?"

"I said not so, surely," replied Barker, with a smile.

"Well, then, Ridley is not thy bishop, and thou shouldst not obey him. For though thou refusest to obey Dr. Bonner, his lordship is not an usurper, but was lawfully appointed in the time of Henry. But Dr. Ridley *was* an usurper. Dr. Bonner was lawfully appointed as every other bishop from the establishment of Christianity; and therefore, if thou acknowledgest his predecessors, thou must acknowledge him, and believe Ridley an usurper."

"But, my lord, suppose I believe the King had the power to appoint Ridley?"

"Thy argument is bad," replied Gardiner, "and we waste time in disputing with thee. If the late King could displace bishops, the present Queen could surely displace them also, much more replace the old ones; unless thou deniest the right of the Queen's

majesty to the crown, and wilt be tried for treason."

"I have heard that the pope, and not the Queen's majesty, doth appoint the bishops."

"I said rightly," replied Gardiner, "thou wast little learned. Are we to talk with thee for a full year? It is folly for a man such as thou to dispute with learned men. If thou doubtest whether we be lawfully appointed, go to the Queen, and ask if we are bishops or no: and if we *be* appointed by our Most Holy Father the Pope, what meaning hath your objection, unless the Queen's majesty saith we are bishops in her despite."

"My lord, you are very learned——"

"Nay," interrupted Gardiner, "if thou hast aught to say, thou wouldst not talk of our learning; yet, methinks, thou shouldst be a man of learning by the objections thou hast made. But I know thy thoughts, which are not new to my ears; and the whole matter can be soon made plain to thee. Thou refusest the bishop appointed

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boldness of many of his contemporaries, who shone in the hour of danger from the very qualities that made them less amiable in private life. Inflexibility makes a glorious patriot, though perhaps a harsh man. Through one form of this personal amiability, Barker had put himself in a helpless position in the hands of the cleverest logician of the day; and he had a reward of humiliation. His arguments were proved false, and himself was suspected of ignorance or deceit in proposing them; and all this arose from personal timidity—from hesitating to declare the truth of his mind. He had recourse to shallow common-places without thinking that other men might be as clever as himself; and found himself at length compelled to make the declaration, when its power must be essentially weakened. He was compelled to confess after all that his duty to God was superior to all he owed to bishops and monarchs, and that duty taught him to obey Ridley and the Bible, rather than Bonner and the Romish church.

"Thou speakest out, now," said Gardiner, in reply to Barker; "but it will serve thee little, and as little dignify thy cause. Nor canst thou claim any pity when thy answers are drawn from thee by long argument. Thou art little wise. Shift with the winds of fortune as you list, and you shall not miss of good company; but think not to keep your conscience and your fortune, too, in all dangers. You should have spoken out at first, if you would shew yourself wise or honest: doing it now, you incur all the danger, and lose all the merit of the confession."

"I pray, my lords," cried one of the doctors rising, "your lordships may pass sentence at once."

One of the lawyers also arose and said—

"Their lordships cannot pass sentence: this is not an acknowledged court, and sentence must be passed by the commission."

"Yea, I know that is the rule," said the doctor, "but here be the principal judges in

the commission, receiving the confession of guilt, and other prisoners are waiting at the door to be examined."

"I fancy, sir," said Barker, "you would not be so very hasty if your life were concerned as nearly as mine is."

"Silence, prisoner!" replied the doctor, "thou art not to speak on this point. The prisons, my lords, are also so filled with men to be examined, that it would be a saving of time to despatch these at once."

"Yea, so I think," said Bonner, "and we will put them out of our hands, and my lord mayor here shall take them away to Newgate."

"Ye dare not do that," cried Sir Thomas Granville, stepping forward; "ye are not to make a court of your own to try men on matters of life and death."

"Who art thou?" exclaimed Bonner, "art thou a doctor in the commission, a lawyer, or what?"

"I am neither," replied Sir Thomas, in an elevated tone.

"Then keep thy mouth shut!" bawled Bonner, "or I will have thee hauled into the street."

"Gently, brother Bonner," said Gardiner, mildly; "and you, Sir Thomas Granville, be pleased not to interrupt our proceedings; for be assured that nothing shall be done contrary to law. Wherefore, I would not advise to deliver the prisoners to the sheriffs to be punished before they have been condemned. But, indeed, it would be well to question them awhile, for, perchance, they will conform to the truth, and be sorry for their offences. What say you, then, to the articles ministered to you?—speak, one of you, and the answer of one shall be set down to both, unless one deny the other's words."

"I marvel, my lords," replied Barker, "that such is the way of proceeding with you. If ye take up a thief, you examine him in open court, and judge him by the report of faithful witnesses; while you seize persons that have done no harm, and

broken no law, and make them answer to articles which are to condemn them, and bring no witnesses, nor allege cause of offence."

"And you offended no law in Thames Street, the other night?" asked Bonner.

"I speak less for myself than for this poor maiden," replied Barker. "Ye shall do as ye please with me, both in torturing and slaying, if ye will set this poor girl at liberty."

"Why, we can do as we will with you now," cried Bonner, "and therefore need not enter into terms with thee."

"Barker," said Gardiner, "why should we do this thou askest? Thinkest thou we hunt for thy life, and to obtain it would give the girl liberty? No, both thou and the girl shall have justice; and it will be your own faults if you be not acquitted."

"Well, then, my lords, I will tell you my mind, if you ask me; but I will not have this girl to bear part in my words."

"Why, she can object to all she doth not like," replied Gardiner.

"Nay, it must not be," said Barker.

"I pray you, Master Barker," said Annot, "if you would speak your mind, regard not me."

"There!" cried Bonner, "thou hearest the girl will stand to thy words."

"Nay, my lord," replied Annot, "I will not do that: I would have Master Barker utter all the truth, if he willeth so to do; and ye may punish me for it if ye will. I am in your hands, nor fear I Master Barker's words shall bring more danger on me."

"How say ye—are ye content to unite and knit yourself to the faith of the Catholic church with us, in the state in which it is now in England?"

"The Catholic church I never did, nor will dissent from," replied Barker.

"Nay, but I speak of the state of the Catholic church in that wise in which we stand now in England, having received the pope to be supreme head."

"I know none other head of the church but only Christ; neither acknowledge the Bishop of Rome to have any more authority than any other bishop hath by the Word of God, and by the doctrine of the old Catholic church four hundred years after Christ."

"Why, then, didst thou acknowledge King Henry and Edward to be supreme head of the church if Christ be the only head?"

"I never granted them to have any supremacy in spiritual things, as the forgiveness of sins, giving of the Holy Ghost, authority to be a judge above the Word of God. And how can I believe ye in your hearts believe the Pope is supreme head in this sense, for all of you have twenty years long preached and written to the contrary, and the Parliament have declared it?"

"Thou liest!" cried Bonner. "When did I so?"

"My Lord Chancellor did, in Henry's time, in his book, "De Vera Obedientia," deny the pope's supremacy, and support the

King's; and the preface to that book was written by you, my lord of London."

"My lord of Winchester, a great learned man," said Bonner, "did write a book against the supremacy of the Pope's holiness, and I also did write a preface before the same book, tending to the same effect; and this we did because it was made treason by the laws of this realm to maintain the pope's authority; for where any uttered his conscience in maintaining the pope's authority, he suffered death for it. But we have acknowledged our faults—my lord of Winchester, at Paul's Cross, and I, myself, as thou seest."

"Yea, but that you wrote against the supremacy of the pope may be approved by Scripture, but that which you now do is against the Word of God."

"Nay, it is not," replied Gardiner; "and it can be proved: but what we now maintain is the same we held before the persecution commenced. The parliament of that time was with most great cruelty constrained

to abolish and put away the primacy from the Bishop of Rome."

"With cruelty! Then I perceive you take a wrong way with cruelty to persuade men's consciences. It should appear, by your doings now, that the cruelty then used hath not persuaded your consciences. How, then, would you have our consciences persuaded with cruelty?"

"There is only one way of truth," said Gardiner; "and if we gave way to persecution rather than perish, and so give up the church to the hands of her enemies, thou hast nought to do with it. Thou art here to be examined—not to examine us."

"Here are two things!" cried Bonner—"mercy and justice. If thou refuse the Queen's mercy, then shalt thou have justice ministered unto thee."

"I never offended nor was disobedient unto her Grace, and yet will I not refuse her mercy," Barker replied.

"Wilt thou conform, then?"

"Never, my lord, till I see it in Scripture."

"Then if thou wilt not receive the Bishop of [illegible] to be supreme head of the Catholic church [illegible] thou shalt never have her mercy. Be [illegible] cannot shew mercy to heretics."

"My [illegible]d, I deny I am a heretic—prove it, and I [illegible]me."

"Why, do you know what is in your creed, 'Credo Ecclesiam Sanctam Catholicam'?"

"Yea, but I find not the Bishop of Rom[illegible]e there. For Catholic signifieth not the Romish church—it signifieth the consent of all true teaching in churches, of all times, and all ages."

"Yea, and that seat of the church is at Rome."

"Thou liest, Edmund Bonner," was shouted in a loud voice, that seemed near, though not in the room; and when the judges arose to see what insolent wretch had spoken, the serving-man ran out, and presently returned, bringing in our old acquaintances, Needham and Barnard. Dr. Bonner looked thunderbolts at the poo

official in whose charge the prisoners had been, and, dreading the loss of his office, the man said, in a humble manner—

"And it please you, my lord, the doctors ordered me to have these men in readiness two hours agone, and I have been waiting at the door till you dispatch the present prisoners, and yonder man spoke ere I was aware, or I had silenced him."

"Go thy way," cried one of the doctors: then addressing himself to the judges, he said—"My lords, as these men are brought in, and half the day is wasted, it may be well to examine them all at once."

"What are their offences?" asked Gardiner.

"They are all suspected," the doctor replied; "and all the parties do know somewhat of each other; perchance if they be put to their answers to day, the commission will have little to do to-morrow, besides condemning them."

"Well, they shall all answer, one for all," cried Dr. Bonner; "and methinks one

of them is a parson. Yea, he is. He h
no gown, but a coat; and his hosen is of
colours—white upper stocks, and she
russet nether stocks—a nice parson, tru

"My appearance," cried Barnard, "
not so much vary from that of parso
thine from an apostle."

"Thou ruffianly knave!" cried Bon
"by God's mother, I will make the
apostle, or give thee the death of one!"

"Thou art fit for nothing but to
deaths," cried Barnard; "and lo,
pretty fellows ye are to judge Christ's fl
My lords of Durham and London and
chester—pretty lords, truly, to mai
the rank doctrines of papism! Why,
Gardiner, didst not only defame this mi
pope, and call him an arch-knave, but
didst set Henry on to turn away his
Kate, and calledst the marriage incest
and unlawful, and didst carry on the
riage with the virtuous and godly
Anne, as thou calledst her. Thou, Bo
didst also assist in that loyal duty t

that is now Queen. Thou, Tonstall, didst write that many doctrines of the popish church were not held for eight hundred years after Christ. And ye go about to burn us that believe as ye believed."

"I go not about to burn you, good man," said Tonstall.

"Barnard," cried Gardiner, "thou art a very bold man: it would not be amiss that thou hadst prudence."

"Prudence!" cried Barnard; "what need of it? Is there a man whose life is sure under such intolerable tyranny as yours? Thinkest thou I will fawn on thee or thine? —nay, I would not, to save my life, as I am sure to lose it."

"Thou art wrong, man," said Tonstall; "thy speech to us will not do thee harm, if thou be conformable to the faith. And surely, men bearing high authority should be civilly entreated while they bring law for what they do."

"They are the enemies of God as well as of Englishmen," cried Barnard; "and I

will not be civil to them. Thou art mild and gentle, and if thou wert a Christian I would wish thee well; but those others, what are they but a ravening wolf and a cunning fox fattening on the blood of saints?"

"Thou liest!" cried Bonner; "thou liest in thy teeth, thou old ruffian! and by God, I will have thee on the rack for thy ribaldry. We did all strive to shew the heretics what favour we could. But what was the end? Did I not set up six Bibles in Paul's Church, and tell you ye might read but not dispute on it; and were ye not always holding forth on what ye read?"

"Yea; the poor people were glad to see God's Word, and finding it proved your cursed religion a foul lie, if they had not spoken, the very stones would have cried out."

"Ye are all a pack of heretic rascals!" cried Bonner. "Was not King Henry obliged to make proclamation against you because you did endeavour to pull down

and destroy all pictures, and statuary, and all venerable things our forefathers had left!"

"The curse of the Lord is on us," cried Barnard, "that we did not pull down you. Had we hanged you and Gardiner as false priests and troublers of the Lord's people, our England would be at peace."

"If you," said Gardiner, mildly, "if you would execute such vengeance on us who assuredly have not been tried, you cannot well complain if you meet with the same after trial and condemnation. But it will not avail much to carry on this talk. You had best answer the questions put to you."

"Prisoners," cried one of the doctors, "ye are to say whether ye acknowledge the Pope's supremacy?"

"Why, Master Doctor," cried Barnard, "if I got my learning from Bonner, I should laugh at the pope, for Bonner did receive commission from King Henry to ordain men during the King's pleasure."

"Yea, that was because the schismatics

did acknowledge that power in the King, and thereby ruled the land; and the faithful did not choose to give up to them. But ye are to answer for yourselves."

"Well, then," cried Barnard, "I will believe, when ye shew me the pope in the Bible."

"But if you will believe nought save what you find in Scripture, it is heresy, and you will be damned."

"Yea, I will believe whatsoever you shall shew by demonstration out of the Scriptures."

"Ho ho!" returned Bonner, "pretty fellows ye are to believe in Scripture! I warrant ye apply to yourselves what Christ saith:—These tokens shall follow them that believe in me: they shall speak with new tongues, they shall cast out devils, and if they drink any deadly poison it shall not hurt them."

"Yea!" said Barnard.

"With what new tongues," cried Bonner, "do ye speak?"

"Forsooth, where before that I came to the knowledge of God's word, I was a foul blasphemer and filthy talker; since I came to the knowledge thereof, I have lauded God, praised God, and given thanks unto God, even with the same tongue; and is not this a new tongue?"

"How do you cast out devils?"

"Christ did cast them out by his word; and behold, they that heartily embrace and faithfully preach his word, do cast out the devil from the hearts of their hearers, as the popish mass never will do."

"Did you ever drink any deadly poison?"

"Yea, forsooth, that have I; for I have drunk of the pestilent traditions and ceremonies of the church of Rome."

"Thou villanous knave!" cried Bonner, "thou thinkest we are afraid to punish thee; but ye shall know that Smithfield shall find faggots enow for all your brotherhood."

But Gardiner, folding his gown about him, arose, and said—

"Methinks this is not an examination,

but a quarrel. You, Barker and Needham, say whether you will conform to the church of Rome.

"I cannot, before you prove it," said Barker.

"You, Needham, how object you to the church?"

"My lord," replied Needham, "I am an unlearned man, but so far as I can read, the church of Rome is heretical in all things wherein she differs from the church established in Edward's days."

"In what point," asked a doctor, "do you find heresy?"

"In that she obeyeth not Christ's voice, as Christ's true church doth."

"Wherein?"

"In Latin service, and robbing the laity of Christ's cup in the sacrament, and in many other things in which it committeth sacrilege."

"Why, Latin service was in England when the pope was gone."

"True, the time was in England when

the pope was away, but not all popery, as in King Henry's days. It was never heard in Scripture that Christ's flock should be fed with an unknown tongue."

"I shall feed thee well enough!" cried Bonner. "Thou shalt be fed with that, I warrant thee, which shall be smally to thine ease."

"Do what God shall suffer; for more ye shall not," Needham replied, firmly.

"Thou art stout now," said Bonner, "and hardy in thine opinion, but if thou wert once brought to the stake, I believe thou wouldst tell me another tale. I advise thee, beware of the fire: it is a sharp matter to burn."

"I have been in danger of burning more than once," said Needham, "and hitherto I have escaped it. But I judge verily it will be my end at the last, and welcome be it by the grace of God. Indeed, it is a hard matter for them to burn that have the mind and soul linked to the body as a thief's foot is tied in a pair of fetters; but if a man be once able, through the help of God's Spirit,

to separate and divide the soul from the body, for him it is no more matter to burn than to eat a piece of bread."

Then Dr. Tonstall said—"Well, Barker, dost thou believe as this man doth?"

"Yea, I do," replied Barker, "with my whole heart."

"Then am I heartily sorry for thee," said Tonstall, with many tears, "as I perceive one of us twain shall be damned; for we be of two faiths, and certain I am that there is but one faith that leadeth to life and salvation."

"Oh, my lord," said Barker, "I hope that we both shall be saved."

"How may that be?" asked Tonstall.

"Right well, sir. For as it hath pleased our Merciful Father, according to the parable, to call me at the third hour of the day, even at the age of thirty years, so I trust he shall call you at the eleventh hour of this your old age, even at eighty years, and give you everlasting life for your portion."

"Well, Barker," said Tonstall, "thou feelest like a man, and I am sorry for thee. I would I might have thee one month in my house at Durham, and I doubt not I could convert thee, or thou in good sooth shouldest convert me. But that may not be. But now, Barker, take pity on thy golden years, and pleasant flowers of lusty youth, before it be too late."

"Dear my lord," cried Barker, "I long for those springing flowers that shall never fade away."

"Then God help thee!" sighed Tonstall, and walked away into a corner.

"By the Lord, ye are birds of one nest," cried Bonner; "but thou, Needham, seemest a civiller poor fellow than Barnard there, and I will be good to thee if I can. Tell me, then, when thou didst last go to thy parish church, and receive the blessed sacrament of the altar."

"I have not been these two years past, and more, nor dare I receive the sacrament as it is administered."

"And why?"

"For three causes, which do make my conscience afraid to receive it. Christ did deliver it to his twelve apostles, and said—'Take, eat, and drink ye all;' and ye eat and drink up all alone. You hold it to be worshipped, contrary to the commandment—'Thou shalt not bow down,' and so forth. You minister it in a strange tongue, contrary to St. Paul—'I had rather five words with understanding, than ten thousand with tongues.'"

"But all these are points of government and discipline, not matters of faith," cried one of the doctors; "they are at the discretion of the pope's holiness, and are not to be disputed by the people. Nor are you to refuse the sacrament of the altar unless you deny the real presence of the body and blood of our Lord in the sacred elements."

"Then, sir, I do not find the actual presence of our Lord on the earth, since he ascended shortly after his death—and how

can he be in heaven and on earth at the same moment?"

"Thou heretic!" cried the other doctor, "wilt thou have plainer words than 'Hoc est corpus meum'—This is my body? Wilt thou deny the Scripture?"

"Yet," said Barker, "our Lord saith, I am a door"—"I am a vine;" and Paul saith, 'That rock was Christ,' and surely these things were said in a figure."

"Ye make a long talk of this," cried Bonner—"learn, heretics, learn!"

"These heretics will not learn," cried one of the doctors; "look how they do glory in themselves. Fools! are ye wiser than the Queen and her council, and all the learned men in the realm?"

"I trust, my lords and gentlemen," replied Needham, "I shall never pin my faith to the wills of monarchs and bishops, but to the Word of God only. But what say ye of our glorying? You would esteem it a poor estate for glory, to be taken from home and family to be railed at as ye rail at us."

"Do ye not believe," cried Bonner, furiously, "that after these words spoken by a priest—'Hoc est corpus meum'—there remaineth no more bread and wine, but the very flesh and blood of Christ as he was born of the Virgin Mary, really and substantially, in quantity and quality, as he did hang upon the cross?"

"Ye cannot find in all Scripture, non est panis," cried Barnard.

"I pray you, suffer me," said Needham, "to ask one question for my learning, and I will answer after."

"A right wise question, I warrant you!" cried Bonner, in high derision.

"God spake to the prophet Ezekiel, saying, 'Thou son of man, take a razor, and shave off the hair of thy head,' and so on. 'Take the third part, and cast it into the fire; and this is Jerusalem.' I pray you, was this hair that the prophet did cast into the fire, or was it Jerusalem?"

"Thou fool!" cried Bonner, "it was hair, and did signify Jerusalem."

"Even so do I understand the words of Christ—'This is my body'—as a figure of his body. It is not to be understood that Christ's carnal, natural, and real body is in the sacrament in quantity and quality as it was born of the Virgin Mary, and as he was crucified on the cross; or why doth Saint Paul say, 'By this ye shall shew the Lord's death till he come;' for how say till he come, if he be present in the bread and wine?"

"I will prove to you," cried one of the doctors, "that Christ is here present, under the form of bread, in quantity and quality."

"Nay, good brother," cried the other, "he is here present, but not in quantity and quality."

"Yea, he is here present in quantity and quality!" repeated the first doctor, emphatically.

"He is here present under a form, and not in quantity and quality," said the second, with equal emphasis.

"You are wrong, good doctor," cried the one.

"I am right, and you are wrong!" replied the other.

"Nay!"

"Yea!"

"I will prove him here in quantity and quality."

"I will prove that he is not here in quantity and quality."

"Thou art an ignorant pretender to learning."

"Thou liest! it is thou that art ignorant."

The two doctors were only men: each clang to his opinion, and battled more sharply against his brother than he had ever done against a heretic, and at length each reverend man hurried from the room in positive abhorrence of breathing the same air as his antagonist; though probably the heat of argument drew them together a few seconds afterwards to renew their discussion in some private room of the palace.

A very nice observer of mankind might

have detected in the lord chancellor's polished and affable manner a sneer at the doctors, as he said, with a just perceptible smile—

"Now, prisoners, will you receive the sacrament of the altar as the church ordaineth?"

"Ho, ho!" cried Barnard, "a pretty question, truly, Master Chancellor. How are we to tell whether we believe as the church ordaineth, until ye are agreed among yourselves? For if one saith Yea, and another Nay, without being put to their question, surely we that be no doctors nor papists may say as much?"

Gardiner, who really had no belief, and was therefore more unprincipled than the doctors, smiled at this reply, as though he found a mischievous pleasure in whatever embarrassed those that had a belief. But Bonner had a belief, such as it was, and he did not understand a prisoner's wit; he arose in a mighty passion, crying—

"Are we to be examined and talked to

by a scum like you? Ye heretic wretches—by the Lord, the fire is too good for your devilish obstinacy."

"I am glad you say so," replied Barnard; "then I will go home, and wait till you find somewhat bad enough for us."

"Go home, scoundrel! thou shalt never go to more than one home, and that is where thy father the devil is waiting for thee. By the Lord, I would a rack were here, I would make you change. Who are ye, ye rascals! but a pack of traitors that object to the holy sacrament? But, by God's mother, there shall be no false doctrines held in my diocese, if fire and sword can root them out; and I will have no more of this idle talk, but make an end."

"My good Lord of London," whispered Gardiner, who cared no more for the church of Rome than for that of Geneva, but, struggling for the Archbishopric of Canterbury, which was in abeyance while Cranmer was in prison, endeavoured to preserve a fair appearance by setting his face against

extreme punishments, after he found that the burning of Hooper and Taylor, instead of repressing heresy, created general fear and dislike—"My lord of London, be wary in what you do, and get quit of this Tonstall, who will raise a nest of hornets about our ears. There are ways of proceeding against heretics without making men talk of us; and those that are obstinate you can readily turn over to the laws, or exercise your own judgment on them when no person is at hand. Yet I would have these dispatched as soon as may be, or we shall not find room. I would I could stay with you to the end; but I find by my dial it is the hour I have promised to speak with the king regarding the Low Countries, and if you can settle this business, I shall be glad if you will come to us."

Thus saying, the lord chancellor, Bishop Gardiner, left his chair, shook hands with Tonstall, and bowing to Sir Thomas, and whispering a hope that no unseemly violence might be practised on the prisoners, departed.

He went after suggesting torture, but before torture was applied: a certain physical delicacy made the sight of pain unpleasing to him, though he shrank not from directing the cruellest. He went away a happy man—full of hopes very brilliant and very reasonable. The archbishopric was kept in the name of the imprisoned Cranmer through his artifices, and was a prize suspended, as it were, between himself and Pole; and as the cardinal, whom he bitterly hated, was also an object of the King's suspicion and abhorrence, he was assured that he should be the victor. Visions of Lambeth, of the red hat, yea, of the triple crown, arose beautiful and clear before his eyes, and he was happy! Fool! in the midst of his cunning and learning, how little did he suspect that in three months he should perish by a most terrible death, hated by all men!

One important effect of Gardiner's departure was soon manifest—and it was that Bonner grew even more insolent and domi-

neering. Gardiner was a superior in rank, and power, and knowledge, and if he had supported any appeal made in his presence, Bonner must have given way without a murmur; but Tonstall was his equal only in station and knowledge: in this room, he was an inferior. No sooner had the Chancellor departed, than Bonner said to the mayor—

"My good lord mayor, you must have charge of this Barnard, and see him taken to the vilest prison you have, and give him little to eat and drink, and keep him and Needham separate. They shall have no mercy here! You will see that they appear at St. Mary Overies Church, before the commission there sitting, by ten of the clock to-morrow morning. I think they will be the first burnt of any now in prison, and I doubt not the sheriff shall receive his writ of execution before the week be out."

The lord mayor then went out to give his orders concerning the prisoners, when Bonner said—

"Now, thou blind wench, say, dost thou believe as these men do?"

Annot was in a situation from which there was no escape. She could not deny, and to affirm was to give herself up to death. She said nothing. Then Bonner cried—

"Giles, bring in Skevington's gyves; I will see what power they have on a woman heretic!"

Giles was absent only a few seconds, and he returned, bearing a kind of strong iron frame, of curious form, which he was directed to put on the girl. Before, however, he could look round, Anne sprang to her young friend, and caught her in her arms. She knew not the use of the instrument; but the idea of applying that rude frame-work to the tender limbs of her friend was enough to fill her with horror, and especially as, on looking round for assistance, she saw that their friend Dr. Feckenham had departed.

These gyves were a frame of stout iron, of a rude resemblance to the human form, having a kind of ring for the head and one for each

of the hands and feet, all of which could be securely fastened. Now the nature of this torture was, that it kept the back nearly double while the body was suspended by the extremities; which position, though not painful at first, by the time the fastenings were locked, became most insufferable torture; and, maintained during three or four hours, not unfrequently crippled a person for life, through injuries received by the spine or the legs.

Anne knew nothing of this: any torture would have affected her equally; and she clasped the poor girl to her bosom as though she were saving her from a well-understood danger. But the methodical serving-man knew little of friendship in his own person, or through the workings of his imagination: he went about his work as indifferently as though it were the most common-place and righteous thing in the world. He took one of the prisoner's hands from her friend's neck, and, thrusting it into the machine, forced the ring on it. To his surprise, the

little hand could not be fastened, but went in and out like a child's hand trying on the mail of a warrior. He looked puzzled for a moment, and then stooped down to try her feet. But Anne, observing the movement, suddenly drew her friend back, and, kneeling on the floor, said—

"No! ye shall not touch her foot. If he will torture her, I will hold the foot, if it must be."

"Nay, dear lady," cried Annot, again putting her arms around the lady's neck, "take not my foot in your hand, nor stoop beside me to do me service. Say where I shall place my foot, and I will do it."

"Nay, Annot, my love," was the reply; "thou hast no friend here but me, and God forbid I should shrink from the humblest duty to thee!"

The foot was found also too small to be held by the gyves; but the bishop, on hearing it, was very far from being satisfied to leave the girl untouched. The present accident seemed a reproach to his skill, and

baulked his cherished revenge. He ordered the men at once to bring a hammer, and beat the rings down to the girl's size. Annot's hand was then laid within the circle of iron, and the man raised a heavy hammer, one blow of which seemed able to crush iron, hand and all; and this the bishop would have cared little for, as this would have been neither the first nor last hand and arm destroyed by him in an irregular manner; nor was this the most painful means. But Dr. Tonstall was again roused, and stepping forward from his corner, confronted Bonner, and said, with tears streaming over his venerable face—

"Brother Bonner! brother Bonner! surely you will not smite over that little girl's hand! She is not fit to be punished in this manner. Leave her, I pray you."

"I will not," cried Bonner. "I will shew that I am master in mine own house. Smite!"

"Wait a moment!" cried Tonstall: "I [illegible] not he Bonner,"

neither God nor man will ever pardon this cruelty; and much I fear that these deeds will make all people hate our church. But of such cruelty I will never be a witness." So saying, the bishop tottered from the room.

But before he had shut the door, the heavy hammer fell, and a shriek burst from nearly every person. Annot alone was unmoved: she turned her face towards her friend, saying with a smile, "I am not hurt, dear lady."

"Smite again and again!" cried the Bishop, "I will have it done."

The man again took the hammer in hand, and smote, slowly at first, but as disappointment moved his temper, quicker and furiously, until he observed the iron beginning to move; when Anne, dismayed at this terrible beating over the arm she so fondly pressed, fearing some horrible catastrophe would be caused by this ungoverned violence, and overcome by the passions that had occupied her mind incessantly during twenty hours, lost her hold on her friend, and fell back on the floor like a dead person.

Sir Thomas Granville had declared that he would not intercede with the bishop for Annot, and his pride had enabled him hitherto to keep his word, much as he disdained the conduct of the bishop. But the present circumstance had not entered his mind, and it destroyed all his resolutions. Snatching up his daughter, still moaning in insensibility, he cried—

"My lord, I pray you, pause awhile: you will kill my child!"

"Take her away, then," cried Bonner.

"How can I take her away like this?" cried the father. "Open the window there, for the love of Heaven. My good lord, we have been long friends; I bear you no malice, nor wish to be foes. Spare yonder girl, I pray you—spare her, on any terms you please—I will purchase her liberty at any price."

"Not for all thy estates," cried Bonner. "What art thou and thy child to me! Get ye gone! ye have no business here. I would not loosen one of the prisoners to

pleasure thee, for thy three manors, nor for the manors of all thy race. Go to the Queen, will ye! Go, I say. Threaten me thou wilt complain of me, and then ask favours of me. Get ye gone! Smite, man, lustily, and thou shalt have the best cup of wine in my cellar."

The knight bore his daughter to the open window, where he endeavoured to restore animation to the child, so much dearer to him than his own heart; and the bishop's man struck with all his might. But the iron was too stout to be bent, or to break on the hand: after a few more blows, it broke where it was attached to the frame, and fell on the floor. The man then pointed out to his master the impossibility of lessening the apertures, without heating the iron, and suggested the necessity of having a smith. The man was then ordered to try the instrument on Barker. The poor minister was very soon fastened securely in a position which he was told he must maintain for three hours; and then Bonner arose and said—

"Ho, Sir Knight, get thee and thy wench away, wilt? for I am going to supper. But look first at this man in the gyves, how he twisteth and turneth in seeking the pleasant place he will not find. Be sure, Knight, thou goest to St. Mary Overie's Church to-morrow morning; for I will have gyves made to fit this stubborn blind girl by then, and by the Lord, she shall have them on, with a whipping on her naked skin. Yea, and by the Lord that made me, I will send her to the Tower, and this Barker too; and I will have them on the rack in each other's sight, until they confess all they're charged withal. So, Sir Knight, be sure you come, and bring your wench there, and I will give orders that you be admitted."

Annot was then forced from the room, and Sir Thomas Granville carried out his insensible daughter in his arms, followed by Ralph.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE sports of Midsummer-day were in progress in Finsbury Fields as Harry Markham rode through on his way from Waltham to Moorgate. The citizens were out in their most brilliant shows for the holyday; and the young and the lovely were exhibiting their prowess and their beauty to the bright sun. But he lingered not for the archery, the wrestling, or the mumming: he went on steadily through the streets thronging with people, all directing their steps for the suburbs several hours earlier than usual, nor stopped before he had reached Thames-street.

To that uncourtly resort of trade he had never penetrated before this day; but the excitement of his mind rendered him indifferent to the possible opinions of his aristocratic friends: he went on as steadily as one born in the street, and entered a house on the bank of the Thames, near the bridge. The room to which he was conducted was occupied by a person that Harry now beheld for the first time; but the countenance of the stranger was one of those that appear to have always been familiar to us. The occupant of the room was a middle-aged man, of large size, whose limbs appeared to have been put together with peculiar regard to strength, and consequently not without regard to grace. His face was round and red, and full of hearty good humour—it was one of those faces that compel persons at once to esteem the owner.

"My name is Markham," Harry commenced.

"And my name is Steynham," interrupted the other. "If you wish not to continue the stranger, I see not why I should."

"This is making s
mony," replied Harry
himself; "and if yo
you to be, ceremony n
am the eldest son of S
Waltham, who——"

"Nay, sir, it req
ticular in your descrip
man, and the name of
to mine ears."

"To the point, th
I understand you are
the church now esta
and that I and my
uphold."

"I cry you merc
Steynham, rather h
frank with you, and i
but, trust me, you
extreme that it may
for me to follow. I n
in declaring my nam
advantage of me in t
by declaring yourself
of Rome, you say tha

to the court and to honour; but if I were to declare myself of an opposite faith, I should deliver a password only to Newgate and Smithfield."

"You are right to be cautious, Master Steynham," said Markham. "I speak hastily because I have not my heart thoroughly at my command; but we shall soon understand each other. What would you say, then, if I am directed to you by an undoubted friend, and that I seek your aid in an enterprise that is against the church, and that, if it fail, will bring me to the scaffold or the prison?"

"I should say," replied Steynham, "that if I give mine aid in a thing that may bring you to the scaffold, it may chance that my neck shall be also in jeopardy—a thing which I endeavour to avoid; and the undoubted friend you speak of giveth a somewhat doubtful proof of his good will. It seemeth somewhat strange that any man belonging to the Markhams, who are renowned Roman Catholics, should come to me because I am

supposed to be a Lutheran, and seek my aid in a matter opposed to their common and notorious faith."

"There is suspicion in your words, Master Steynham," replied Markham, "as though I were setting a trap for your feet; and perhaps it is no more than reasonable that you should suspect me. Yet I could prove to you in a moment that I am what I pretend to be, and that I have been trusted with matters that nearly concern you, which I will not mention even here, unless other means fail. But as I understand you are a merchant that tradeth to foreign lands, and that hath much intercourse with mankind, surely you have learned that there is some difference between an honest man and a knave, even in their language and manner. I put myself in your power by coming here, and, believe me, one glance in your face assured me you were an honest man; so that I required no other surety."

"You are right!" cried Steynham—"I mean not in the latter part of your speech,

but the former. I have talked with many men, both knavish and honest ones, though in truth I find the former somewhat the more numerous. I have seen knaves in many disguises, but never one that could put on well the disguise of an ingenuous young gentleman. I will trust you. I know not that I am much of a coward, young gentleman. I have had in my time to keep in my own bosom sufficient coolness to serve for a whole ship's crew, when I have been in imminent danger of wreck, and my men have been ready to leap into the gulf, preferring death to danger. I have had also to wield a sword in my time, and know what a good friend a stout mast or a broad wall is when a dozen blades are flying at one's throat. I beg you therefore to know that I distrust not myself in the common hazards of the world. But as yet I have never essayed bodily tortures in prisons; and as (if I be what you say) there may be some few lives depending on my words, you see I must keep myself safe as long as I

may, and not put my flesh in such a strai[t] as that I might no longer have comman[d] over my tongue. But proceed."

"You shall know, then, that there is [a] young girl hath been made prisoner by th[e] Bishop of London, and is now confined som[e]where about Paul's Church, and I requi[re] your advice how to set her at liberty."

"What is her offence?"

"She is a suspected heretic; I mean Lutheran, or whatever it is called—one of the new faith. Dr. Bonner is my friend; and I have besought him to release her, which he would have done but he discovered the poor girl was befriended by a person he hateth. Yes, Dr. Bonner is my friend, and I love him well; but I love his enemy a thousand times better, and to please her—them, I mean—I will have the girl out of his hands though I be hanged for it."

"Hath the girl no other merit or demerit than what you say?" asked Steynham, rather wickedly.

"None," the other replied; "she is a

poor blind girl, of whom I know nothing, but that she is the support of her mother who is a widow; and Master Barker told me——"

"Master Barker!" cried Steynham, "what Master Barker?"

"Master Barker of Islington."

"Is he a friend of yours?"

"Yes, I may call him my friend; but I knew him not before last evening."

"And why doth not Master Barker call on me himself?" asked Steynham.

"He is in the hands of Dr. Bonner."

"In the hands of Dr. Bonner!" said Steynham, with unwonted feeling. "Speak on, sir, quickly; this putteth a new face on the matter."

"Master Barker said that if I told you he was the innocent cause of the capture of this girl, you would assist me with your advice so far as would not endanger yourself."

"Did Master Barker say that! Trust me, sir, he said less than truth. I will not only

give my advice, but I will give you my right arm as well as my head as soon as I understand the matter."

"Nay, Master Steynham; that shall *not* be," replied Markham: "I have sinned in this matter, though thoughtlessly, rather than wilfully. I can scarcely think with patience on what I have done. I have brought a human being and a woman into danger, that never harmed me, and that I knew not certainly to deserve punishment. That shall not happen again. My own hand shall make the atonement for my ill deed. I will not suffer you to endanger yourself, nor to lessen the labour which it is my duty to undertake by myself."

"Well, well, Master Markham," replied the other, "I applaud your spirit, though I understand not all you say. You are a knight's son, and I am a merchant; but trust me, the heart and nature of true gentlemen can make a good understanding between persons even more widely separated by fortune. I will trust you entirely. In

the present times of danger, when men appear compelled to regard their own safety before all other considerations, it is pleasant to hear the generous words of one that in risking his own life regardeth that of another, and that other a stranger; a world of such hearts would be somewhat better than this world hath been in my time. But to release you from all fear on my account, I will tell you fully how I stand. Until the last few hours, I have been somewhat bold in my behaviour in England, although I have been suspected. I have been in little danger, because I trade largely with Spain and the Low Countries, and King Philip would as soon give up a walled town as me. In this boldness, the night before last, I seized one of Bishop Bonner's men in my house, intending to have him punished as a vagabond by the mayor; but the knave by some means escaped, and long before now has doubtless made his lordship acquainted with his misadventure. Now, with the King on my side, I could defy all the

bishops in the realm; but hark in your ear, good sir; King Philip is about to depart. Yea! it is true. A few days or weeks, and England will have no King, and Mary no husband. You know how earnestly his majesty hath looked for children; perhaps you know that the Queen's late misfortune assures him that no heir of his blood shall ever sit on the throne of England. Besides, Philip is not absolute monarch here, as in his own country; and Mary is neither fair enough, nor young enough, nor pleasant enough, to win him to stay. More than all this,—Master Markham, if I spoke to you as a tradesman to a courtier, I would say that Philip loveth a pretty girl; but as I take you for a Christian man as well as a gentleman, I will say that Philip, with his bitter zeal for the church, loveth to indulge the sins of the flesh, and desireth to spend his days and nights in those vices that English people will not endure in the husband of their Queen. Wherefore, because the Queen will bring him no children, and

that he may be a cruel and absolute tyrant, and that he may have what women he shall choose, he will leave England. Believe, then, that I desire not to fight with Dr. Bonner single-handed; for whatever be my faith, I am not one that wisheth to bear testimony of my conscience in the flames. I crave a humbler fortune, and am quite content to go through life in a quiet way, worshipping God in churches where I can do it safely, and in my own house when I dare not do it abroad. But as even this is denied me in England at the present time, I am ready to aid you in any honest undertaking this very day or night, and spread my sails for Holland or Germany the next hour."

"It is well," cried Markham, seizing Steynham's hand, which he cordially pressed—"Master Barker sent me to the right man."

"I have not spoken of Barker yet," replied the other; "but I shall before we part. At present, young gentleman, I must ask what you resolve to do when this affair is

ended. Have you the power to defy the king?"

"I think not of it. No man that thinketh of himself will do a worthy deed. Let this girl be safe, and I will soon resolve on my own actions."

"That must not be," replied Steynham. "I know not this captive girl; but I know you. I shall therefore refuse to liberate her, who may be hardly worth the trouble, if you put in her place. My head is not quite so young as yours: and before I aid you, you must provide for your own safety. But that shall be the subject of further thought. You have applied to the bishop, and been refused. You would use force or stratagem to rescue the prisoner?"

"Yes."

"Then, in resorting to stratagem you must have the means of applying force. I could raise men in the city to storm a town or do any bold deed, but I cannot depend on their secrecy; besides that, they would assuredly be punished,—can you provide

any strong men that are not known in the city, and that you could put in safety afterwards?"

"Yes, fifty will follow me to death."

"And this enterprise must be effected suddenly?"

"Yes, or it will be in vain. The girl is now in the bishop's hands, of course not guarded by many armed men, and I would rescue her from her torture: but more than this, I know not how soon he might deliver her to the secular power, and if she be once in the hands of the sheriff, no attempt can be made with a chance of success."

"Is Master Barker in Paul's also?"

"I know not: but I believe he is in some place within the city walls."

"Well, Master Markham, I will help you; but we must fight for Barker as well as the girl, for I believe that I am partly the cause of his imprisonment. Cause then, Master Markham, your fifty men to be armed secretly under their cloaks; send them into the city to different taverns; appoint a

watchword and a place of meeting; and as soon as you have done it come to me again."

"That is all done," replied Markham; "my men are by this hour at their posts. In an enterprise of this nature I was bound to provide for the last extremity. I knew not that I should find you willing to aid me; I knew not that I should find you at your house, and being resolved to succeed, I could not leave the event to chance."

"You did right, sir. The good soldier looketh at all sides of his enterprise. Yet, Master Markham, pardon me for a plain word before we go forth on this work of danger. We may be of different religions, or rather, we may look on certain disputed points with different regards; yet surely you must lament as well as I, that this beautiful and excellent country is made the scene of such horrible tortures? Leaving all differences of faith out of the question, can there be a doubt that the general spirit of Edward's reign, faulty though it were,

was more like the reign of a Christian monarch than this is beginning to be? These tortures, these horrors, make me ashamed of the name of man: they make me fly my country. But, Master Markham, my thoughts are not yours. That which I do from my heart and conscience, you do from passion. But suffer me to warn you at this moment that we are Englishmen. I love my country, that compelleth me to fly from her; cease not you to love her because you are about to transgress her laws. No, let us reverence the land that hath bred us and given us many blessings: let us pray that the time may soon come when she shall have universal peace. If you are resolved to effect your object at all risks, it may happen that the lives of men may be in your hand; and the heat of action may make us feel as though we were storming an enemy's town: but let us take especial care that we do no wrong, no violence; that we shed no man's blood lightly, and spoil no man's goods—the deed we are to do, let us do that a

and do it solemnly, as a sacrifice; not wildly and wantonly, as a revenge."

"I thank you for your caution," replied Harry. "I am young and thoughtless; but the spirit of your words is that in which I would now desire to act, even if I had not suffered too keenly from a hasty deed not to keep strict watch over my mind in future."

"Then in God's name we will set about this work in good earnest," cried Steynham; "and in the first place we will find where the prisoners are placed."

The two new friends then walked out towards Paul's Church. They turned up into East Cheap, where they took a cup of wine each; they drank together also in Watling-street; but not because either of them was inordinately given to drink, loved the roistering companions to be met with in taverns, or was at that moment in need of such support as wine could give: they went only to observe whether the men were at their posts. There were two familiar faces

at each place—two stout hearty fellows, who were laying the foundation for a sturdy enterprise by attacking a good joint of meat: the men had walked into London, and had not long arrived.

No conversation passed between the parties. Harry just glanced in the face of the men to observe whether they appeared to wish for a private interview to communicate a mishap; and as they looked steadily and indifferently, in obedience to their orders, Harry was assured that all the appointed number were ready. Paul's Church was still open, though the evening was pretty far advanced, and the friends walked in among the loungers, looking about with careful eyes though indifferent manner for any sign of the locality of prisoners, or any person that could give them information. But they found little to assist them. The alleys of the church were becoming bare of people; and the few that were there passed on hastily and got out of the church as fast as they could: they were evidently

men going home to their families, and took Paul's Church as the shortest cut from Ludgate to West Cheap. After walking to and fro three or four times, from one end of the church to the other, without perceiving an individual that could be supposed able to reply to their questions, Steynham said—

"Faith, Master Markham, we have found but indifferent success so far, nor do I see reason to expect we should have better after measuring the length of this floor a dozen times over. Now, I have just bethought me that there is nigh at hand a tavern to which the bishop's men do oftentimes resort with other noblemen's servants in the city. What say you,—will you go and listen awhile to their talk?"

"Yea, very willingly," Harry replied.

"Come, then," said Steynham. "But perchance your person is known to some of them; and though there is small chance that our purpose shall be effected this night without the disclosure of our names, it will be well for us not to be over communicative

beforehand. Wherefore you will see good to draw your cloak about your chin, and press your hat somewhat more over your brow; and suffer me to speak, if speaking be needful."

To this Harry consented, as to the orders of an old campaigner, and they immediately left the church by the north entrance, and turning up Pannier Alley, at about midway between Paul's Church and Newgate Market, they stopped at a "fair large inn," on which was painted the "lively portraiture of a mitre."

"Ah, my lord bishop," cried Steynham to the jolly red-faced host, who, with an everlasting smile, stood at the receipt of custom, surrounded by half a dozen waiters in white aprons, "I see that nothing but the chain and the mace will serve your turn. You look to exchange your holy head-piece for the comfortable cap of my lord mayor! Well, well, you industrious men gather money as fast as our noble spendthrifts scatter it."

"It pleaseth your good worship to be merry," replied mine host, the muscular action of a smile making his small twinkling eyes yet smaller—"it pleaseth you to be merry. Alas! these be hard times for us poor taverners; but will ye take a seat, my masters, for I promise you I have the best tap of wine you have drunk this many a day?"

"Why, truly, mine host, we called to drink a stoup of wine; but this is Midsummer day, when we look for jolly companions as well as for wine; and if you have some good company here not too far advanced in their cups to be peaceable with civil men that are rather out of practice with the sword, why we will enter."

"Well, let me think a bit," said mine host, who was by no means like those generally considered as given to thinking, spare and hungry—"let me think. Well, if you be very peaceably inclined, my masters, there is a company up stairs that will suit you, in the little back-room with windows

looking on the market. It is two girls—nay, good sirs, mistake me not—these girls be neither young nor fair, and they have a man with them of a very long face, and a sober look; and by the same token he hath sat these two hours over a single quart of wine: but he shall not be turned out, sirs, because, ye see, whether a man spend a penny or a shilling, he hath a right to a welcome. If ye crave peaceable company, ye had better join these; for by my soul they are quiet: from what I can gather they have walked a score of miles this day to beg pardon of the good Bishop of London for one of their kinsmen attainted of heresy.'

The eyes of the two friends were involuntarily turned towards each other as Boniface said this: circumstances so much like their own interested them. But Steynham quickly replied—

"Nay, mine host, when I craved sober company, I desired not to fall in with heretics; and trust me, I have some doubt of your faith myself, when you declare these

to be sober people: for by the punishment they receive at the hand of the executioner, I should take them to be rather worse than murtherers—yea, almost as bad as traitors."

"You are welcome to your joke," replied mine host, with another merry twinkle of his eye, "for joke it would be to talk of a taverner's faith. Why, know ye not that we desire men of all faiths to frequent our houses so long as they drink, nor did you ever hear of a vintner put to the question respecting his belief. No, no, master; we be of the faith of those that be above us—which is, always to keep good liquor; and, if you will not believe me, I am ready to go before any court and declare my faith, whether the head of it be Dr. Edmund Bonner or Martin Luther—it matters little to Matthew Swillet, of the Mitre."

"A right hearty sort of faith for a man that would live comfortably with his neighbours," said Steynham; "but as we happen not to be vintners, such a faith would not suit us quite so well; nor should we con-

sider ourselves altogether safe in consorting with heretics, wherefore we would pray you to give us admittance to some of the true faith, as it is now lawfully taught, that we might take a hearty glass without danger."

"Well," said Master Swillet, "there is Master Jack Pullwell, that is first man to the fletcher in West Chepe, who hath a company of famous bowmen with him in the Robin-Hood chamber. They seem to be quiet men, and sober; or if wine have got into their heads, it is none of mine."

"But Finsbury wine hath strength," replied Steynham; "and as we have not been into the archery ground this day, nor are very great marksmen, perhaps we should not suit the company very well at such a time, to say nothing of our doubts that these valiant gentlemen are commonly rather warm on such a day as this, and might not be still enough for us peaceable folk."

"Well," said mine host Swillet, "there is in the Royalty chamber a company of young citizens and citizens' sons that have been down the river in a barge."

"Nay, Master Swillet, that will not do for us plain men," cried Steynham; "these young gentlemen in their gay apparel would mock at our humble show, which would breed a quarrel."

"Well, in God's name, then," cried Master Swillet, embarrassed by the delicateness of Steynham, "go into all the rooms from top to bottom, and cast your eye on the company, and stay with those that please you best; for I know of none other party but a set of the bishop's serving men, and other such, that are playing at cards and tables in the Sanctuary chamber."

"Those are the very men that will suit us," cried Steynham; "bishops' men should be men of peace and gravity; wherefore we will go up to them, if you will shew us the way; for as yet we are somewhat unacquainted with your house."

As the tapster was leading the way to the Sanctuary, and pointing out the unexpected steps, the sudden projections of beams, and abrupt depressions of ceilings in the dark passages, that threatened injury to life

or limb of unaccustomed travellers in that direction, Harry whispered in his companion's ear—

"Are we not wasting our time, Master Steynham? We have been talking ten minutes, as it seemeth to me, with yon taverner, and we are not at all nearer to accomplishing our purpose."

"Be patient, Master Markham," was the reply: "I have been young in years and hasty in action, as you are, but I am so no longer. We are on the right track now, and as we can do nothing effectually before midnight, no time can be wasted before then that is employed in keeping from us those suspicions that a hasty proceeding would create, and which would tend to mar our enterprise. No, no, sir—be cool in your behaviour, and gather all the knowledge that you can; and when the proper time comes you shall not find me slack in deed, or over loquacious with taverners and such like."

The low room into which the tapster took them, where every man's nose was in danger

of being beaten flat by the massive beams that ran across the roof at the distance of every yard, contained a score of men in twos, and threes, and fours, clad exactly alike—that is, in brown hosen and doublets, and busily engaged in the interesting games of tables, five-men's morris, primero, cross and pile, and dice. Our two friends, as may be supposed, did not challenge any of the company to a trial of skill; neither of them was inclined to gamble with serving-men, even if circumstances compelled them to sit down with them, Master Steynham despising gamesters of all kinds, while Markham's aristocratic feelings were sufficiently outraged by a temporary and enforced association with the men. Harry looked round warily on the groups of waiting-men, grooms, sextons, and vergers, so earnestly engaged in amusing themselves, and perceiving no one that he knew, set himself to follow his companion's directions, as well as to observe his behaviour, which hitherto had somewhat amused him.

"Bring me a quart of Canary and an-

ther of Rhenish, of your best taps," said Steynham to the tapster; "and bid mine host come up and take a draught with us; for we be come out to spend a merry hour, and would give a share of our liquor to any honest man that will talk with us."

As the gentlemen who occupied the room were connected with the church, as a matter of course they belonged to the class of honest men. They had paid little attention to the entrance of the two strangers; they merely looked up rather angrily at the intrusion, and immediately pursued their games with rather less noise; but on hearing Steynham's words, which were evidence of the kind of liberality that goes most directly to the hearts of serving-men, they gave them the common salutation of the day; and one of them signified their approval of Master Steynham's noble sentiments, by observing—

"Right heartily said, good sir nothing like good company to make a holiday pass merrily! Will you spend an hour at cards or dice with us?"

"Ye are men of the right sort," replied Steynham; "and I thank you heartily for your good will; but you shall excuse us in the particular of gaming, for I doubt your skill would be too great for us. But if ye will take your turn with us in our wine—ye shall be heartily welcome."

As the drawer, when he put the wine on the table, said that Master Swillet was very busy and could not come, which was what Steynham expected, the door was closed, and our two friends sat down and paid as much attention to the games as though they cared about it.

Markham was amused with his companion's manners, but in his anxiety to begin in earnest the deed which he resolved to do, he fancied there was an unnecessary formality and waste of time in these proceedings, when every necessary information might be gathered by giving the men a gallon or two of wine. He knew not that many years of Steynham's life had been occupied in transactions in foreign lands

and seas, both of peace and war, the success of which depended on continual watchfulness and caution, which, if they delayed the commencement, probably secured the successful termination of an enterprise. Strangers might have supposed Steynham a hearty lover of gaming, judging by the attention he now paid to gamesters: they might also have thought him a much more fervent lover of wine-bibbing than he was, observing how briskly he sent round the flagon; for he so frequently pressed his not unwilling companions to drink, that he found it necessary to have wine brought up in gallon measures rather than in quarts. This amusement was soon found to be of a more interesting nature than any games of cards or dice, the implements of which were gradually left untouched on the benches; and the gentlemen leaned back to enjoy their wine, an enjoyment of so peculiar a nature that it survives when a man is incapable of feeling any other, which was partly the present case. It was not won-

derful that the personal weaknesses of individuals became rather prominent under the influence of liquor, or that they were exhibited in song. Half a dozen gentlemen, of not very musical physiognomies, to Markham's chagrin broke into the popular three-part song, "Come kiss me, Moll;" but one of them broke down in the middle; another a little further, and the remainder of the piece was concluded as a solo. Another gentleman then volunteered a song in which there was more sound than sense, and to which Steynham listened with commendable resignation, though the solemn minor key of the air made little amends for the words, which began as follows:—

Blest be the man that invented good drink,
Ale or wine, I care not—so the liquor be stanch;
'Tis the soul of all worth, and let him that saith nay,
Guzzle out of the well till he bursteth his ——

The singer stopped short, and whistled as one does when catching oneself about to utter a word not allowed by good manners, and every man whistled along with him;

after which, to the accompaniment of thumping their cups on the table, they all joined in the chorus—

Rap, rap, rap, with your goblets rap,
Your true summum bonum 's the tankard and tap.

The bold captain, he buyeth him shield and sword,
And putteth on harness to keep off evil—
Fool! let him buy wine, for the man that is drunk
Laughs at foes big as giants, and grim as the ——
Phew-w-w.
Rap, rap, rap, with your goblets rap,
No armour so sure as the tankard and tap.

Quod Nell, when John's skin she seeth well lined,
Thou sot, thy back will get bare, I tell ye—
Thou liest, quod John, I've bought me stout wear,
Wine 's a cloak for back, and a doublet for ——
Phew-w-w.
Rap, rap, rap, with your goblets rap,
No tailor so good as the tankard and tap.

Sir Priest thumpeth pulpit in talking what not,
And heretics quelleth with faggot and rope—
Let him preach stout Canary, my life to a groat
He shall win every soul, be he Luther or ——
Phew-w-w.
Rap, rap, rap, with your goblets rap,
No divine so sound as the tankard and tap.

After singing about thirty such verses, the end was welcomed with general acclamations, when Steynham, who had joined most heartily in the whistling and the choruses, cried—

"A right merry song, my masters, or I would I might never join good company again. But methinks the part concerning heretics and popes might be spared, since we know that the holy fathers of the church see fit to punish heresy severely."

"Yea, but I made not the song," quoth the singer; "I did but sing it all through."

"To be sure, friend—take a draught, will you?—to be sure; I took you not for a poet, believe me. But I only thought it might be somewhat dangerous to sing about heretics when we hear that the good Bishop of London hath brought heretics to day from Fulham, and hath got them all even now in his palace."

"Be not afraid, good sir," replied one of the company; "I am a servant of the bishop's, and whatever we choose to sing or

say, will breed us no harm. But you are wrong in saying the bishop hath them all in his house, for one is sent to Newgate, and the others are in Paul's."

"Nay, I but spoke of a young woman and a false priest, that folks say the bishop keepeth for punishment."

"They say false," cried the man, "for I saw them taken to Paul's with my own eyes."

"Not a safe prison," said Steynham, "I should fancy they would walk out at night-fall."

"They must have strong nails to break through the foundation," said the man, "for they are snug in St. Faith's."

"They will be safe there," replied Steynham; "but what do we talk of—about heretics! Come, my masters, let us have another song, and another gallon of wine."

Steynham's request was complied with: the song and the wine were soon forthcoming, but very shortly after, giving a look of intelligence to his companion, he arose

and expressed a wish to go out and see a little more amusement, and at the same time desired that he might be allowed to send up a gallon or two of wine, which desire was granted without very extraordinary pressing. The two friends then went down, leaving the serving-men in a condition which was an assurance that they would not stir so long as they could procure any liquid to put down their throats.

As they passed mine host, Master Steynham ordered, paid for, and saw conveyed to his friends, a gallon of strong wine, and a gallon of as potent ale; and calculating that the mixture of the two liquids would produce an effect favourable to his wishes, he went out with Markham.

"Now then, Master Markham," said he, "I will take the chain from your tongue, for my own pleasure as well as yours; but I see you are made to be a true soldier, in that you obey thoroughly what you agree to obey. You may suppose me to be somewhat of a pedant in my mode of procuring information,

but in my younger days I was a prisoner of war in half a dozen different nations, through the folly of my commanders; and since then I have learned that no trouble is too great to shut the eyes of an enemy. But I forget not that I am a poor merchant of this city, and that you are a knight's son, and a gentleman of the court; wherefore we will now put ourselves in our right places—you to command, and I to obey, so that you inform me thoroughly of your purposes, that I may judge whether you have a chance of success. I have taken on me to be the spokesman hitherto, because I believed I knew better how to deal with men in circumstances where delay and management somewhat gall the impatient spirit of the youthful."

"Nay, Master Steynham," said Markham, "I will not lead you. I have come to you for aid in a business that touches me very nearly: I will not be so insolent as to ask you to put yourself under my direction. No; if you are a merchant, I can discern a soldier in you, and I doubt not

you have seen more fighting than I, wherefore, since I ask your aid, I will obey you in whatever way you think I ought to act."

"Well," said Steynham, "perhaps it is best; I have led as well as followed in my time, and as leader I may find it necessary to summon a force rather more powerful and manageable than your armed men—the apprentices will not be led by a stranger. You know that these two heretics (as you call them) are confined in St. Faith's Church, which lieth beneath Paul's, for further examination and torture. It will be well to endeavour to speak to them before we employ force. It is too late now to attempt to corrupt the watch; nor can I tell what men will be about when we might want their aid: to say the truth, I would not choose to make them faithless to their trust, the consequence of which would be to ruin their wives and families."

As Steynham thus spoke, they arrived at the gate of the churchyard towards Newgate market. The gate was shut, and as

there were lights in the bishop's palace close by, they paused awhile till their way seemed clear, when they sprung over.

There was little danger of discovery now; for not only were very few people about in this gloomy part of the city, but the shadows of the deep buttresses and the forest of tombs around sufficiently concealed them from every one beyond the churchyard wall. They walked on close under the black walls, scarcely speaking till they had made nearly a circuit of the building, but looking at every door and window, partly from the curiosity with which people contemplate a difficulty they are to struggle with, and partly, perhaps, to discover an opening into the building.

At length, when they had again arrived very near to the bishop's palace, they fancied they discerned a human figure in a dark corner of the building, sitting on the step of a small door which led from the church into the churchyard. They stopped awhile, and observed this figure somewhat anxiously,

as it appeared almost certain that the church was watched, in which case the difficulty of their enterprise would be greatly increased. They kept their eyes steadily fixed on the object for several minutes without observing any motion, when Steynham took up a heavy stone, and tossed it to a considerable distance beyond the sentinel, hoping to arouse him and send him away in the opposite direction. But no motion was discernible—the man, or whatever it was, appeared either asleep or deaf. Steynham then threw a stone somewhat nearer, and Markham one close to him, with no other effect, when they went forth from their place of concealment, and cautiously approached the mysterious object. When they were sufficiently close to examine it, they perceived that it was no soldier or servant in livery that kept watch, but a man in a common cloak and cap, apparently one of the populace. He sat on a very low step, with his head bent down between his knees; and it appeared that he had not been at all disturbed by the noise

of the stones. Steynham then spoke in a subdued voice; but received no answer. Markham also made some common-place remark, but with very different success; for no sooner had he spoken than the man raised himself from the ground, and springing on him, cast him on his back on the pavement, and raised his arm to strike him. But the blow was not given; as Steynham, who stood at Markham's side, caught the arm of the stranger, and held it with a firm grasp while he turned a narrow strip of light on him from his dark lantern. To his great surprise, he saw that the hand which he held grasped a sharp and very strong blade, which no doubt would, in another moment, have been in the heart of his companion. Dragging the man away to enable Markham to rise, he bore him behind one of the buttresses, pulled off his cap, and turned the light on his face, when Markham cried—

"Why, Ralph, is that you here? Would you murder your friend, Harry Markham!"

But the man, if it were indeed Ralph [illegible] spoke not, but suddenly darted away fro[illegible] their grasp, and sprang over the step wher[illegible] he had been sitting: the door flew open be[illegible] fore him, and he rushed into the churc[illegible], and bolted the door behind him.

"An acquaintance of yours, Master Mar[illegible]-ham," said Steynham; "but not much of a friend, I think, judging from what he bore in his hand, for that kind of lover's gifts is very little to my taste."

"I am ashamed," replied Harry, "to say what the man was, so closely am I reproached by his actions. This man, to the best of my belief, is but a poor silly fool belonging to Sir Thomas Granville, at Clawton, by Islington; and I believe he hath escaped from his home to be near the girl whom we seek, either at the command of his mistress, or because the girl is known to him."

"Ha! say you so?" cried Steynham, "then assuredly the girl is in St. Faith's Church, as you have heard, and we must endeavour to get inside."

Steynham then knocked gently at the door; but received no answer: he knocked louder, and spoke, but no reply was given. At the same time, the watch came by, and the two gentlemen had to crouch, and play at hide-and-seek behind the tombs, to keep out of their hands. Immediately after they had gone by into Chepe, Steynham remarked that the time was come to meet the men near Paul's Cross; and he and Markham went back to that side of the church. A stranger might have passed along, either without or within the wall, and failed to notice a human being near: but no sooner had Markham uttered the signal agreed on, than Paul's Yard seemed to be crowded with human beings. From behind every buttress a head was popped, in token of watchfulness; from behind every tomb-stone a human figure raised itself. A low muttering of the passwords was heard around in every direction. The men were then called into the shadow, under the wall of the south front of Paul's Church, placed side by side, and

counted; and being found the right number, were ordered to conceal themselves from the watch, and not to move from the places they might choose for secrecy, unless they heard a certain sound of a whistle, which Markham explained. And in a moment the body of men had disappeared.

"Are your men well trained to caution and obedience?" asked Steynham.

"They are not trained at all," replied Markham; "they are my father's yeomen and franklins, entirely unaccustomed to obedience; but I believe a single word will be sufficient for them."

"We will try them," said Steynham, in a low voice, to his friend. He then said aloud—"Hark ye, fellows," and the men shewed themselves as he spoke—"ye will mind," said Steynham, "that three blasts of a whistle are to be your signal; when ye are to have your arms in your hand, and follow where the whistle may lead you, at no other signal are ye to move—and beware, one and all, of the watch."

The men waited a moment after these words were spoken, and then they all dropped quietly into their hiding-places.

Markham and Steynham then went round the vast cathedral, trying every door and every window within their reach, until they had very nearly reached the point from which they had started. At length Steynham said—

"It seemeth to me, Master Markham, that it would shew little wisdom for us to wait here all night in the expectation that these black walls will open to us: wherefore, my advice is, that we strive to get into the church."

To this Markham assented, expressing a little doubt as to the means of effecting it, when Steynham, pointing out a low window in the deepest shadow, and having called up a couple of the armed men, and set them to watch near the window, drew a dagger from his belt, with which he began at once to loosen the glass. Markham forced his sword through the other side of the window,

and drew it down to the bottom, when the whole window was lifted from the frame, and the two friends stepped into the church. When they stood under the roof of Paul's Church, they listened awhile to discern whether any other persons were moving. It was desirable to speak with Ralph, if Ralph it were they had previously seen to enter the church; and Steynham, after a considerable pause, ventured to throw the light of his lanthorn around; but he did it without discovering what he sought: nothing was discernible that spoke of living man within this building. The two friends then walked, bearing their naked swords in their hands, from the chapel into which they had descended from the window, to the centre of the building, immediately under which was the church of St. Faith, where the prisoner was confined for the morrow's examination.

The cross-legged statue of an old crusader reclined almost directly in the centre of the nave, and Steynham and Markham

sat there awhile, to resolve on what they were to do. Men less brave, or less resolute than they, might in those days of popular superstition, have been somewhat scared to sit where they sat. Silence itself, with perfect darkness, was sufficiently awful; but the lightest whisper was much more astounding, for it roared through the whole extent of the building like a strong wind, and the slightest movement sent back a sound from an hundred curves with an increased power. Light also, the only other instrument of communication they bore, had its terrors, for every gleam of their lanthorns penetrated into a nook of shadows, but discovered nothing, save an arch adorned with hideous figures of strange animals, and a depth of unusual blackness beyond, relieved occasionally by the white limbs of ivory roods over altars in little chapels under the walls. Of these there was a very great number: they were almost as numerous as the windows; and now shut up in darkness, their white roods assumed a

spectral and hideous appearance, when they caught a gleam of the lanthorn. Had the whole building been uniform—the work of one man, or of one mind—it might not have created fear: long ranges of arches in the centre, and of uniform chapels along the walls of the building, would have inspired more admiration than dread; but the contrast of the two styles of the long avenues of circular arches in the nave and transept, with the pointed chapels along the walls, and the pointed windows everywhere, disturbed the imagination: the want of perfect harmony of style confused the attention, and gave the whole scene a power which it did not actually claim from its own nature, and an appearance of vastness beyond that which it really possessed.

In speaking of the fear which the building might have excited, it is not meant that the persons now in the nave were afraid—they were both too courageous to be terrified—but certain feelings were created by the scene, that took from Steynham the

levity of his good humour, and made Markham anxious to be moving. Probably, neither of them would have liked to be alone in this old burial place, where many a tale of spirits was current; though with a companion they were scarcely aware of the courage they derived from him.

"It would be well," whispered Steynham, "if we could liberate these people without raising an alarm; and if we can descend to St. Faith's church, we may do it. There is a door in yonder pillar, that leadeth down to it; but it is very heavy and strong, and the noise of forcing it open would betray us, besides that there is another door at the bottom of the stairs, even stronger."

Thus saying, Steynham went to the pillar he had mentioned, and, trying the door, found it locked; he also put his ear close to it, but in vain, for the sound of a cannon at the depth of the cells in the subterranean church, would have been inaudible at that door.

"Is there no other door?" asked Mark-

haste; "methinks our speed is not very great."

"Patience!" replied Steynham, turning towards the south transept; "we shall, I doubt not, get to the undercroft soon, with caution: there is an entrance to the church, not very well fastened, in the Chapter House, if we can get there—and here is the door."

The Chapter House was lightly secured on the side of the church, as violence on that side had never been contemplated: a single lock of no great strength was the sole barrier against entrance from the south transept, and this, by a little steady and continual pressure, gave way.

Their path was now one of considerable danger, as this room was close to the high road on one side, and on the other to a row of tradesmen's houses built into the walls of the church, and commanding a view into the Chapter House, the walls being pierced with many capacious windows, which, on this very dark night, would have betrayed

the faintest gleam of their lamp. At another time, they would have stopped to admire the exceeding beauty of that circular room, its four central pillars expanding into arches that covered the whole roof with fanlike projections and supports, and the long-pointed windows, supported by ancient figures in marble, and exhibiting the history of St. Paul. At present, they thought no more of this masterpiece of architectural beauty than of a cell in Newgate, and were quite prepared to destroy every portion of its beauty, if it interfered with their purpose—to find a way into the vaults below. Afraid to use their lanthorns, they groped about for a considerable time, before they found the door; as it was not in either of the pillars, but in a little closet in the wall. Having at length discovered this, Steynham turned his light into it, and Harry, drawing his sword, was rushing forward, when Steynham remarked—

"Be not in haste, Master Markham, and I pray you put up your sword, for we shall not meet any bodily foe in these somewhat

gloomy regions. A little light will be of more use than swords."

"Who goes there?" was cried, in a strange voice, close to Steynham's ear, making him draw back, and close the lanthorn.

"By the blessed Virgin," whispered Harry, "here is some one keeping watch over the girl! Throw a little light along the passage, and I will put my sword through him."

"Stay awhile!" replied the other, also in a whisper. "I was somewhat startled at a challenge so near mine ear; but now I reflect on it, it is the watch beyond the wall, who hath espied the light from our lanthorns through yonder window, which suffereth a little sunshine to come here. Move not, nor speak, and the man will presently pass on."

After a few minutes the watchman did pass on, having satisfied himself that he had been mistaken, or being unwilling to take the trouble of ascertaining the truth; and Steynham then said in a low voice—

"Hold to the wall on your right hand,

and tread slowly: these steps are much worn, and, so far as I can judge from their slippery softness, they have been little used of late years, and we must go down in the dark."

This caution, though partaking of that formality which appeared to pervade all Steynham's conduct in his adventures, was by no means useless; for not only did they find some considerable difficulty in getting to the bottom of the stairs without a fall, but they no sooner came to the entrance of the church, than they beheld a light, and heard voices within the walls.

This was a matter of considerable importance to them, and required very careful consideration. It was probable there were guards placed over the prisoners, of whom there might be many; in which case they had to ascertain how many there were, and what chance they might have in a struggle with them, who probably had fire-arms. To Steynham's mind this interruption suggested a consideration of how they were to

get back safe if they should be foiled; but Markham thought only of the delay it would cause in accomplishing what his lady-love required—the freedom of Annot: but he was quite resolved not to leave the church with that work incomplete. This old church was a very convenient place for making such observations, since not only was the roof rather low, and supported on huge ribs of stone, which made the building always gloomy, but the three rows of clustered pillars out of which those ribs sprung, and on which rested the whole, were of such an enormous size, and so numerous, that in very few directions could a person see from wall to wall, while in every cluster were many corners and nooks formed by the joining of pillars, in each of which a man might securely conceal himself.

The two adventurers stepped cautiously into the church, and crossing from pillar to pillar in the direction of the light, were in a few minutes able to distinguish words though not to see the persons. The first sentence they distinguished was—

"There is no folly or obstinacy in all Christendom so great as yours. With very little or no learning, ye maintain doctrines not allowed by the church: that is your folly. And although there be divers learned men that talk with ye, and shew ye the right way, ye persist in your false opinions: that is your obstinacy."

"But," replied another voice, "I do but believe what the Bible teacheth, and you profess to have your doctrines out of the Bible. Why then talk to me so much of councils, and fathers—can they alter the Word?"

"Nay," was the reply, "fathers and councils do in nowise alter the word of Scripture: they only declare its meaning."

"But where find you that I am to follow their opinion?"

"The church declareth that their opinions are to be followed."

"And where hath your church that power?"

"Man, dost thou not know that the

church and the Scriptures are two ministers that act together by the will of God; and that to doubt the authority of the church is rank blasphemy all the same as though thou wert to dispute the authority of Scripture? It is a crime that cannot be pardoned: how can the church pardon the man that denieth her authority. Assuredly thou hast a heart of stone, or thou wouldst feel how terrible a thing it must be to endure the torture of fire, which thou wilt have to undergo in a few days, but which is as nothing compared with that which is prepared for thee."

While listening to this conversation, Steynham had gradually drawn near to the speakers, and as the sentence last quoted was spoken, motioning Harry to guard the door, he laid his hand on the speaker's, shoulder saying—

"A rather uncomfortable kind of argument this, good sir, when the one party threateneth the other with burning on earth and in hell."

"What fellow art thou?—take thy hand from my cloak!" cried the other, endeavouring to free himself from Steynham's vigorous grasp.

"Nay, good sir," cried Steynham, "I hold it not good to set men at liberty that wield such power as ye do. Come in, my good friend, and fasten the door behind you until we decide what to do, and keep your sword in your hand."

This latter sentence was addressed to Markham, who did as he was desired, and rushing forward, cordially grasped Barker's hand, and congratulated him on the prospect of escape: but in the midst of his exultation in the near prospect of attaining his object, he was thrown back among fears and difficulties; for Annot was not here—the only persons in the room were Dr. Bonner's two doctors, and Barker, who was chained to a staple in the wall. The place in which he was confined was a little cell in the church wall, several of which were to be seen; they had occasionally been used as

prisons during the three centuries they had been in existence, but were generally employed to hold lumber and some of the instruments used at the altar.

"Ye cannot expect," said Steynham to the doctors—"ye cannot expect men to reason well when ye have put chains round their bodies: a man's limbs should be as free as his tongue—a fact of which I am about to convince you by experience, the best of teachers."

"Master Steynham, what are ye about to do?" cried Barker; "I trust ye mean no harm to these gentlemen."

"No harm, good Barker," was the reply. "I shall only mete out a measure to them of what they have been giving you."

"No; I pray you, good Steynham, leave me to my prison, and suffer these gentlemen to return; they have done me no wrong, and I am fully prepared for the end."

"Yea, but your life is your own, and not Edmund Bonner's—give it away, if ye will; but let him not filch it from you."

While he had been speaking, he had examined Barker's chain, and observing a lock, he desired the doctors to give up their keys, among which he looked to find one to fit it: they were given up very reluctantly. Steynham selected one from the bunch, and the next moment the chain fell from around Barker.

"I know not how to thank you for liberating me from a danger of my own seeking," said Barker. "My mind was settled; and after the torture I have endured this day, I fear not the fire. If Annot Palmer be safe from the trouble brought on her by me, I could be content to die."

"Master Barker," cried Harry Markham, "we came hither to seek that girl; and do you say you know nothing of her?"

"I know nothing of her these five hours," replied Barker—"I am the only prisoner in this place."

"Will you inform us where this blind girl is imprisoned?" asked Harry of the

doctors; but they only returned him a grim smile for a time, until at length one remarked—

"Methinks the Queen's majesty will reward Master Markham for the zeal exerted this night."

"I care nothing for queens or bishops to-night," replied Harry; "I want this girl, and I will have her. I did, at your master's request, the office of thief-taker, and I seek to undo it. What say ye, then, to my offer?—If ye will point out to us the place where this girl is shut up, so that we may take her, ye shall be free to go hence, and my father shall procure you two of the best benefices in this diocese."

"Rather beware, young man," was the reply, "that thy father lose not that which now he hath. We despise the gifts of sacrilegious wretches like thou. For the deeds of this night, young man, you may expect a heavy recompence."

"It will be to little purpose to talk with these gentlemen," said Steynham; "we had

better trust to our own discretion, which, thank God, hath as yet well served us. There is nothing to be done but to fasten these gentlemen here awhile, and make the best of our way. I suppose the bishop is privy to the place of your confinement, Master Barker?"

"Yea, that he is."

"Then our plans are formed. These men shall be locked up in chains until to-morrow, when they will be freed. I would not have them shut up in this darkness, to be eaten by vermin, as some of their fraternity have caused people to be destroyed. Now, Master Barker, you must come along with us, and put your life to its proper use—not throw it away in a shameful fire. It is well to be patient, and humble, and resigned; but it doth appear to me the merest folly for any man to give himself up to a cruel persecutor, while he can preserve himself. I would as lief cast away my sword at the approach of a lion. No, no; ye shall be just and true, even with your persecutor; but give

yourself not unto him so long as your life may be useful. We are about to look for this girl that Master Markham spoke of; and surely you will think yourself better employed in aiding us than in lying in this filthy hole."

"I am ready to follow you," said Barker, "but I cannot aid you, for my limbs are so cramped that I can hardly walk."

"We will carry you, then," was the reply.

Steynham then passed the chain around the two doctors, and fastened them back to back, Markham standing by, sword in hand, to guard against any sudden attack of their despair or rage. At length, when they appeared so firmly bound that it was impossible to free themselves from the chain, Steynham said—

"We will now wish you a merry night, good sirs; for assuredly you will remain here till to-morrow. Gentlemen so fond of argument as you, will not want for amusement in this somewhat confined apartment: but I would inform you that it would be a waste

of your eloquence to cry for succour, since ye are some fifty feet below Paul's Cross; and as we shall fasten all the doors, ye might as well cry from the centre of the earth. Steynham then locked the door of the cell, and with the bunch of keys brought by the doctors, fastened all the doors which they had opened, and then he and his companions very deliberately ascended the stairs towards the Chapter House.

CHAPTER XV.

THERE was no delay in ascending to the floor of Paul's Church. The doors were all open; but those that had fastenings were made secure behind them by Markham and Steynham, while those that had none, were left to chance; and so rapidly had all this been done that only a few minutes had elapsed since they had descended to the vaults. They passed through the Chapter House again, and went towards the window that had been opened, supporting Barker, who appeared somewhat crippled, Steynham remarking by the way—

"Now, then, Master Markham, I am ready for any enterprise to assist you and friend Barker here. My own was ended when I beheld my friend in safety; but I gather from your words and from Barker's that the girl you talk of hath claims on us against these doctors and bishops, and never trust me again if you find me backward in fight, or idle in council, when I struggle for my friend. But what have we here?"

As Steynham spoke, they were nigh the open window, when a bright, glaring, and most vivid light shot through the windows, and faintly illuminated the whole extent of the church. The three gentlemen drew back; but not so far but they beheld their men making their way out of the churchyard to prevent a discovery of their hiding. The light grew every moment stronger. It poured through the long painted windows, and lay like broad masses of rich mosaic on the floor: then it shifted and turned about until it caught the pillars, and marked them out, bold and white, to nearly eighty feet

high, when they parted like opening flowers and spread forth a number of enormous ribs that ran out and supported the roof, but dwindled away until they were lost in its florid tracery. The brightness grew every moment more intense, and the danger of the persons in the church greater. Flowing through the south windows, the light rolled into the pointed chapels of the north aisle, and made them as light as in mid-day; the corbels from the roofs were even more perfect in their hideousness than by day; every pillar had its own cluster of human effigies that hung over grinning, and the exquisite screen before the choir was a mass of beautiful and grotesque figures, in whose faces were divine love, diabolical scorn, and human agony and jollity: angels, devils, witches, kings, and virgins, shone out distinctly on the groundwork of pointed arches interwoven with leaves; and all the mass being transparent, though in stone, through it shone out boldly, awfully, but hideously, the Christ of the high altar, carved in white

marble by a most cunning master, who had given all the agony and torture without the divinity and majesty.

From the fitful and strangely penetrating brightness, one might have supposed a supernatural morning was coming, and the yellow sun shining freshly upon the world before its time; but the alternations of dimness and blackness with the splendour shewed that it was artificial. Steynham understood what it signified, and said to his companions—

"Ho, ho, my friends, here are your true Englishmen—can't have too much of a good thing. Here have the good old customs of Midsummer Eve been done away for twenty years, save one or two solitary celebrations; but now that they are begun again, people must have them on Midsummer Day also. Nay, I should wonder but little if they carried them through the week. But stand back under the pillar; for to be seen here is to exchange places with the reverend doctors below? As Steynham spoke, the

procession of torches and cressets was visible at the opening towards Chepe, where the men were waiting awhile before they dispersed; and the danger of discovery was apparent.

At this moment a very large stone of great weight fell with a terrible crash close by the three friends—so close that it tore away a piece of Markham's cloak, and so heavy that it crushed the pavement where it fell. Steynham started from his position behind the pillar, crying to his companions,

"Look, look!—yonder is the man who hath attempted our lives."

His two friends looked in the direction of his finger, and in a gallery immediately under the roof, among the grinning corbels, was very plainly to be discerned the face of a living man watching them.

"Methinks a good bow would stand our friend at present," said Markham.

"No, Master Markham," Barker said, "we will not begin to shed blood, or wish for it: this man may not have wilfully cast

the stone, but may be in as great straits as we are. Yonder wall is four hundred years old, and a stone may well fall from it, though lightly touched."

"True, Barker, but we must know what he is," Steynham replied; "our liberty is in jeopardy, and if we lose that we shall lose our lives. We must have yonder fellow down or go up to him."

Markham and Steynham then beckoned to him to come down; but the head and features were unmoved: Markham drew his sword and menaced him, and he acknowledged the threat by grinning at him, and holding out his fist.

"By my soul!" cried Markham, "I know that face; it is Ralph, that would have stabbed me awhile back; it is Mistress Anne—I mean Sir Thomas Granville's fool; and surely the blind girl is near him."

"Then we must go up to yonder hole," said Steynham; "for at such a height the fellow is safe from our hands, and may take us unawares, and he will never come down,

for fear of us. Surely we can find the road if a fool has found it."

He sprang away towards the choir, where entrances were generally put for the upper part of the building, Markham at his side, and Barker behind; but observing the limping pace of the minister, he stopped and said—

"Good Barker, I pray thee take care of thyself; why shouldest thou seek thy death! Lie thee down, man, under one of these arches, till we return; for if thou be not safely carried away from Dr. Bonner's keeping, all my love for this night's work will be gone."

Barker did lie down under one of the lowest arches, where it was not possible a stone from above could reach him, and his companions went to the choir.

In one of the four pillars that supported the tower, they found a small open door, and they immediately began to ascend the little winding staircase, with no light but what they could see at a distance through

the lancet holes, which made the ascent easy enough by day, but gave no assistance now. They were entirely at the mercy of an enemy in this long, dark, and dizzying ascent: so worn were the steps by frequent use during five centuries, that a stone so large as that which they had just escaped, set in motion at the top, would have met no angle to stop it, but would have rushed to the bottom and borne down even a dozen strong men also. It happened, however, that their foe thought not of this mode of warfare, or cared not for it, for the two adventurers met with no obstruction. After a long and wearisome groping up the staircase, which would not permit a man to stand upright, they came to another low door like that by which they had entered, and perceived that it led to a stone gallery; and though they appeared by no means at the top of the stairs, they stepped into the passage or gallery, which, from its position over the arches of the middle aisle, they knew to be the right one. As Barker had

said, it would require no great strength to force a stone out of its place; for in most parts the cement had perished, and a considerable depth of the very stones around them had crumbled away and made a thick dust on the floor, which gave to the persons walking there feelings very much opposed to the consciousness of safety. As they approached the spot where they had seen the head of a man, a person arose from a window-sill, over which he had been leaning, and sprang along the gallery with the utmost celerity: Steynham directed the light of his lanthorn after him, and beheld him go through an arch at the farther end, whither they followed him. But when they reached the end of the gallery, they were amazed to find neither the person they had seen, nor any way by which he could escape. It was a mere vaulted room at the end of the gallery, in which, at the height of a man's head, were several small unglazed windows, and each of these was open to the sky, as Markham ascertained by putting his hand through.

But the lights had now disappeared, so that nothing was to be seen save the black sky, and they concluded rightly that they were near the top of one of the hollow pinnacles of the church. Markham called "Ralph" several times, believing it was the fool they had followed; but no reply was given, and he almost fancied that the man must have forced himself through one of the windows, and dashed himself to pieces on the pavement. There was only one alternative left—either to return to the church below, or follow the stairs to some other floor. Steynham was inclined to return; but Markham could not help fancying that he had seen Ralph, and that he was here either through an acquaintance with Mistress Granville's friend, or at her own commands, and that no other cause could lure him from home to such a place. Markham was for another ascent; to which Steynham immediately agreed, and again they bent their heads and ascended. They now used their lanthorns a little, but cautiously.

Getting high above the pavement, they less feared the dim light being perceived, and indeed the only places where it could be visible were the narrow strips of light-holes, one of which was in every third layer of stones. Well it was for them that they did use their lanthorns, for without them they would have dashed their brains out on the floor of the church. More than once they came to what appeared open doors—one step from which, and they would have fallen more than an hundred feet without touching the wall. More than once they beheld chasms before them, which required very wary walking and leaping to pass over safely.

Their road was not all this time up the spiral staircase; they passed through rooms and galleries, pursuing every track that tended upwards. At length their road was terminated by an old oak door, through the chinks of which the wind beat furiously, and the two explorers believed they were at the end of this laborious travelling. The door was locked; but at an application of

their united strength, it gave way, and crumbled into dust. They found themselves now on the uppermost part of the roof of Paul's Church, on the north side of the nave. To advance farther in this direction on so dark a night, appeared to be certain destruction, so steep was the roof, as far as it was visible,—so uncertain was it whether the parapet or ledge was deep enough to hold them,—and so strong the wind seemed to be, where the utmost steadiness was required. Yet they did not hesitate long. As, with the assistance of their lanthorns, they looked along the vast expanse of roof, which appeared like the carriage-road of a city rather than the covering of a building, they beheld a man leaning against a tower at the extreme west, and they went out on the roof.

Pressing their heels against the ridges formed by the joints of the lead, they went safely to the bottom, where was a gutter for carrying off water, with battlements sufficiently high to allow them to walk without

a certainty of slipping over the dreadful precipice. As they drew nigh the western extremity, the man continued to stand still—he was evidently driven to a position whence there was no escape. But as Steynham, who went first, approached the man, he saw that he held his sword pointed towards him—a short stout weapon very dangerous at close quarters, though of little use against one of the common length in the hands of a master of the art of defence. In spite of his natural coolness, Steynham was become somewhat impatient of all this hunting over Paul's Church, and as soon as he beheld the sword pointed at him, he drew his own, and steadying himself as well as he could, advanced against his opposer. The battlement was somewhat deeper near the little tower at the corner, so that a man might stand upright. Steynham was therefore in no anxiety about the issue, and with a couple of turnings of his wrists, caused the short sword to drop, and secured it.

"Now then, my man," said he, "you

had best behave like a reasonable person, if you would choose not to be tossed over this wall."

The man spoke not; but observing that Steynham had dropped the point of his sword, sprang on him, and endeavoured to throw him over. But that was no easy task: Steynham was no child to be tossed to and fro, or to be lifted by a man of common strength: he took his opponent by the shoulder, and laid him on his back in a moment. He then darted the full light of the lanthorn in his face, which greatly bewildered him; and Markham coming up and looking closely at him, the prisoner, grinding his teeth at him, shewed that he knew him.

"Now, my good fellow, be quiet—be quiet!" said Steynham.

"I know him well—him there!" was the reply. "The villain! the coward!—that I had put the sword through him!"

"My good fellow, you must not bear these bloody thoughts," said Steynham, "or

I shall fancy you pitched the stone just now to break my head."

"Nay, I meant you no harm," was the reply. "'Twas he—there—Markham!"

"I am minded to cast ye over this wall, and see how you will fly," said Steynham, "and I will do it if ye harbour these bad thoughts."

"Cast me over and you like—what care I?" was the reply. "Mistress Anne is gone home crying ready to break her heart, and Annot is shut up here in prison—what care I if ye cast me over!"

"The fool, if it be a fool, hath a heart," said Steynham to Markham; "but I have no skill in talking to this gear—you must bring him to reason."

"Why, Ralph," said Markham, with a more familiar knowledge of the way in which the individual must be addressed to soothe him, "I marvel that you forget old friends so soon, and be so spiteful—such a kind fellow as you. And say you that Mistress Anne hath gone home sad?"

"Yea, that hath she: and you—you—a knight's son—to give our your Annot to a set of bloody villains to be burnt!"

"Yea, but we will go and knock down her prison, and take her home—nay, you shall take her home if you be quiet, and throw no more stones. And so Mistress Anne hath been here in London to-day, hath she?"

"Yea, that she hath, in Paul's, and much did she weep when she went home."

"Yes, good Ralph, because she could not take Annot away with her."

"To be sure: we are all fond of our Annot."

"And they have put her in Paul's Church, have they?"

"Yea, they have; and I will never go away before I get her out."

"But why, my bold Ralph, why did you not break her prison, and take her home before night-fall?"

"Did I not strive to do it? but how was I to climb up that great tower?"

As Ralph spoke he glanced at the West Tower, popularly called the Lollard's Tower, of which Markham took no outward notice, but continued his questions.

"And so you saw Annot put into prison?"

"Yea, I saw her brought into the church, and then they carried her up and locked the doors."

"Well, Ralph, my good fellow, we will have Annot very shortly, if you will listen to me; and I will give you money that you may buy some sweetmeats and take to her."

When Ralph, through familiar talk, had been brought at length to place some little confidence in what was said to him, Markham easily extracted from him an account of Sir Thomas Granville's attendance along with his daughter at the examination of Annot, together with his own escape from their care and return to the church.

It appeared that Ralph, when he put on the priest's gown, had had sense enough to conceal a sword belonging to one of the bishop's men, under his jerkin, which gave

him courage; though, probably, he would have run a mile rather than fight an inch. He had gone about half way to Islington behind the knight, his master, but took the first opportunity of escaping and returning to Paul's Church, where he arrived soon enough to see Annot sent to her prison in the tower. In the course of this evening he had examined the tower on the outside and the inside, and discovering no access, had, unobservedly, found his way to the leads of Paul's Church, the nearest attainable point: but, seeing himself on the wrong side, he had come down after the church was closed for the night, and had found the door bolted only on the inside, where they had first seen him. In flying from them he had gone up again on the same side, as the only way he could find; and when they missed him at the end of the gallery, he had sprung through one of the windows to get away from them, and dropped on the leads.

A consultation now took place on what was to be done. Neither of them knew how access to the tower could be gained

from any part of Paul's Church, or whether they could penetrate into it through St. Gregory's: it was certain they could not cross to the other side of the roof, and endeavour to make their way into the Lollard's Tower, without very great danger—without almost certain destruction; and it was determined that they should descend, and if they failed to discover the door, attempt the ascent from the west front, by means of ladders which were kept in a shed under the walls of the church.

They went down without accident—Steynham and Markham, through the care with which they stepped, but Ralph through the care they took of him; for though, when guided by his excited imagination, he had scaled the most frightful precipices and avoided the most deceitful pit-falls, now, when acting in concert with reasonable beings, he stumbled every moment, and could only with very great difficulty be brought down to the floor. But when there, and confronted with Barker, his confidence in all of them was unbounded: he shook hands with Barker, with Steynham, and

even with Markham, and was perfectly pliable; and while the name of Annot crept into every sentence he uttered, he doubted not that they were in earnest, or that they were able to liberate her.

But neither the lame man nor the fool was likely to be useful now. Markham recommended that they should be conveyed by one of his men to the water side, and put on board at once; and to this Barker gave a reluctant assent, though assured that he could not be of any service in the approaching struggle. But there was no time now for the indulgence of nice feelings of honour: he would not stay to be an obstruction, merely to shew his courage. The door at which Ralph had been seated was unfastened, and they all went out into the churchyard. Markham gave proper directions to one of his men, and Ralph and Barker were conducted to the ship.

Then the two leaders began their search through Paul's Church for the entrance to the Lollard's Tower; but though they found

many doors, they found none of which they were certain, and most of them were so firmly made of oak and iron, that it appeared a work of very long duration to break them in, and they resolved on ascending by the outside.

The men had returned to their posts, and were all lurking about the church: their leaders asked whether the watch had been their twelve-o'clock round, and finding that they had not, but would probably come in a few minutes, directions were given to them for their conduct when the business of the night came on. Some were to guard the entrance to the churchyard from Watling Street, some to guard the lane across Paternoster Row to Newgate market, some to keep a free passage on the south side to the river, the remainder to be ready for any service at the west end by Ludgate, which was the only point in direct communication with a watch-gate; and all were to follow three peculiar blasts of a whistle. Other entrances were left unnoticed, because they were all in the

direction of Chepe, and access could not be gained to the west, the scene of operations, without forcing the guard at north or south, or by making a way through the church by means of the east door. But even in that event, the guard at Paternoster corner were in command of the north-door; the guard at Watling Street were at the south door, and the greatest force was at the west door, so that there was no possibility of being taken by surprise. The score of houses built into the walls of the church on the south side, they cared very little for.

The watch were now heard approaching, when the men slunk into their hiding-places, and Markham and Steynham returned to the church. As soon as the watch had gone by, the men went to their posts, and Steynham and Markham with half-a-dozen servants, went to look for the ladders. They were not long in discovering them, and did not hesitate about beating the locks from the chains that secured them. A

ladder, some eighty feet long, was soon put on the men's shoulders, carried to the West front, and reared against the Lollard's tower, and Markham sprang up.

"Stay awhile," whispered Steynham, "be pleased to stay here, and order your men; I will go up to yonder tower."

"Nay, by mine honour," cried Markham, "no man shall do this, save me. I will obey you in all else, but I will go up to the prison before any man else."

"Ha! say you so?—then I pray you go slowly and carefully, and look well where you plant your feet; for a false step, or a slippery one will be fatal. Think of your father and friends, young gentleman, and remember, that if any mischance befall you, we shall leave your enterprise unfinished."

Markham pressed Steynham's hand, and went up the ladder, where he was soon invisible to his friends below. But when he had reached eighty feet from the ground, he was very far from the prison; he had reached

only about midway. A glance at the heavy stone tower above his head, which appeared half as high as the spire itself, assured him that it was a hopeless attempt there; but observing at his right hand one of the flying buttresses, by which the upper roof, and the roof of the chapels were bound together and supported, he sprang from the ladder, caught the buttress with his arms, and slid down to the lower roof. As he turned about, he saw that Steynham had been just behind him, though unobserved: the cautious merchant had, probably, doubted the young man's caution, and followed to protect him.

"Steady, steady!" whispered Steynham.

"Master Steynham," cried Harry, "another ladder, for the love of Heaven! A tall ladder stuck against yonder buttress, and I can reach the window."

"You shall have a ladder in a minute," he replied, "if you will stand quietly where you are; and we can put this ladder against St. Gregory's tower, which will be more convenient."

Steynham then went back, the ladder was shifted, and in a few seconds, another ladder was drawn upon the roof. This was reared and steadied as well as possible, though not very safely, against one of the pinnacles; and Markham went up to the window in the tower. He found himself even now somewhat too far from the window, the centre of which he could but just reach, by going to the very top of the ladder, a somewhat dangerous position in the high wind continually there. The interior was perfectly dark, appearing the more gloomy, from his ability to perceive the opposite window of the tower; and being quite still, Harry hesitated about making an effort to obtain access to the room, whose depth he could not ascertain. He called gently, "Annot!" and received no answer; but after repeating the name several times, a soft feminine voice, as of one awakening from sleep, replied, "Yes, mother."

"Annot, Annot!" he cried again, "is it you?" and the same soft voice replied, "Yes, I am here."

"Come to me here at the window," he cried.

"The window is high, I cannot reach it; and I am chained to the wall," was the reply.

"Try to loosen your chain."

"Nay, it is too strong: but who is it speaks to me?"

"It is a friend, Annot: I am come to release you."

The window before which he stood had been made for the emission of sound; this, as well as the opposite one, having been a bell-tower. It was a double window, with a stone shaft in the centre; and though a young girl might have been drawn through one of the openings, it was impossible for a man armed, to have gone in and returned back to the ladder with such a burden. He called for a hammer, or some other strong implement; and Steynham, who was very near to him, handed him a very heavy hammer directly, and offered both iron bars and pickaxes: for, discovering the mason's tools

that were continually kept for the repairs of the church, as soon as Harry had mounted, he sent a man to convey them to the roof. Harry then turned to the window, and cried to the girl within

"Stand aside, Annot—I must beat the stones within."

"Who is it that speaks to me!" was the reply; "who is it that cometh to the window?"

"It is a friend, Annot, beware!"

"If you be indeed a friend, I care not for the stones falling on me," she replied.

Markham then chopped vigorously at one of the upper stones, the exposure of which, during three centuries, to continual currents of wind and rain, with frost, had rendered this part of his task easy: the stone fell in dust as he beat it; and having once made an opening, it was not difficult to beat the other stones off one by one.

The opening now being large enough to admit him, he prepared to leave his ladder; but fancying the prisoner's voice had seemed

at a considerable distance, he asked how far it was from the window to the floor; and she said, it was twice her height, as she judged from his voice. Harry then mounted to the window-sill, and turning his lanthorn into the prison, leaped down, and no sooner had he looked into the girl's face, than in the excitement of the moment, he threw his arms around her neck, and kissed her lips and cheeks, as though she had been a sister or mistress.

But it was only for a moment, for the young girl withdrew herself from his arms, blushing and terrified, and Harry begged her pardon, and set about freeing her from the chain, which he soon accomplished. He then tried the door leading down to the church, but this prison had been too often used by Bishops of London to be left insecure. The bolts and locks without were too firm to be moved by a prisoner. While he was yet examining this door, a head was thrust into the window, and a good-humoured voice said—

"Leave bishops alone for making safe

work with their prisoners. We must adventure on the ladder. Lift the girl into my hands, and I will take her down."

"No man shall carry her but me," cried Harry. "I will bear her on my shoulder."

"And who are you that will do this?" asked Annot; "what will you do with me?"

"Fear not, good girl," Markham replied; "I will rather harm myself than thee."

"Do you come from my mother?" she asked.

"I do not, my good girl," he replied; "but I trust you shall very shortly see her."

"And can you not tell me something concerning her? Doth she want for aught? doth she miss me very much?"

"There is scarce time to say what I know," replied Markham; "you must be put in safety before we can talk of your mother; but be assured, you shall see her, and be with her very shortly."

"Sir," Annot said, "tell me, are you not Master Harry Markham?"

"Nay, why do you ask, girl? or why do you suppose me to be Master Markham."

"I think no gentleman besides would strive to set me free."

"And why?"

"Because I believe Mistress Anne Granville would ask no other to help me; and sure am I that my dear lady hath sent you."

"She hath sent me, indeed, Annot, by the most powerful commands," Markham replied, with moistened eyes; "and if you will go with me, you will surely be at liberty, and see her very shortly; and dearly does she love you."

"Yea, I know that she does love me well, or I would not care to leave this prison any more: God's blessing be on her for caring for so helpless a creature as me! But tell me, sir, if you are Master Markham?"

"I am, indeed," he replied.

"Then will I go with you," said Annot, offering her hand.

Markham now called to Steynham, and

on his appearing at the window, desired him to come into the prison, and lift the girl up to him when he had gained the window: but the very shadow of Anne Granville's love had given the girl confidence and hope, and she threw her arms round Markham's neck, and besought him not to leave her in the hands of another person.

"Dear girl, be not afraid; I will not leave thee a moment," Markham replied. "This man is a true friend of thine and mine; yes, and of Barker's."

"Ah! where is good Master Barker?"

"We have saved him."

"Be speedy," cried Steynham, springing into the room—"fear not, girl; I will be with thee though thou passest through the fire."

Annot detected, in this sentence, the password which she herself had used in meetings in woods near Islington, and gave her hand to Steynham, saying—"I will trust you, and thank you heartily, sir."

Then Markham sprang up to the win-

dow, and got through upon the ladder, which he found steadied by men placed there by Steynham's provident care; and leaning over, drew up Annot, and held her in his arms on the ladder.

"Now, my dear girl," whispered he, "put thy arms steadily around my neck, and clasp thy hands, and let them never be loosed, for I cannot hold thee; for we are going down a ladder that requireth all my strength, and once to slip, we shall never see Mistress Anne Granville's face—never hear her voice any more."

"I will go down the ladder by myself, dear sir:" said she, "the deep gulf below affrighteth not one who hath never beheld what it is; and my hands are to me in the place of eyes. I can well descend this ladder, were it a mile down, if you will be pleased—I shame to mention it—but, for our dear lady's sake, if you will go down before me, and hold my kirtle over my feet."

Harry did as she desired, and both went, without accident, down to the lower roof.

As they turned from this upper ladder, Steynham slipped down in a moment at their side; and they beheld what they had not before noticed—that much of the darkness had passed away; and on looking over the parapet they perceived that their difficulties, instead of being overcome, were commencing. It appeared that, quietly as they had executed their labours, they had not been altogether unobserved. A considerable number of watchmen, with their torches and lanthorns, were always about Ludgate; and two of the standing watch, lanthorn in hand, were permanently in the street between the Gate and Paul's Church. Some of these, by the flickering of their lights, had discovered the movement about Paul's Church, and now came up to see what it meant. As Steynham looked over the parapet, there were about half-a-dozen of these watchmen engaged in altercation with the men stationed at the west front; and as their lanthorns gave sufficient light to shew the ladders, there was no longer a

chance that the watch would pass by without observing them. The men, therefore, did not conceal themselves, but stood forth, and forbade the watchmen to proceed; and though these venerable persons began to handle their long bills rather suspiciously, the sight of the fire-arms carried by Markham's men effectually prevented any vigorous attack.

But, on observing the boldness of this defiance, the watchmen thought nothing less than that the city was surrounded by an army from France, or that another Wyatt was rampant in the land, and one of the nimblest of them made the best of his way to Ludgate, where he rang a huge bell kept there for the purpose of summoning a large body of the watch on extraordinary occasions. The sound of this bell came to Steynham's ears at the same time that he perceived that they were embroiled with the watch. He now spoke, and his clear voice rang through the churchyard as plainly as the bell.

"Good fellows," he cried, "stand to your weapons, and let no man come further than the corner: but four of you come hither—no more than four—and hold the ladder that we may come down."

The watchmen, amazed at this loud voice high above their heads, trimmed their lanthorns, and held them towards the Lollard's Tower: and now the two men and the woman were plainly seen—and seen with horror, as the watchmen looked for nothing less than the pillaging of Paul's Church. The adventurers were soon down from the roof: for though the latter descent was much greater than the former, their road was better, the ladder was stronger, its position steadier, and nearness to the earth gave confidence: but however quick they were, before they reached the bottom they heard from many quarters that the bell had not been rung without effect: for up the Ludgate Hill a dozen watchmen were coming at their best speed, and the noise of scuffling was heard at the north and south doors.

Perceiving that Markham was taking care of Annot, Steynham directed him along the south side, and himself sprang to the north to draw the men away from the spot where they could no longer be of use. But when he returned in a few seconds, he found Markham with one arm around Annot, and his sword in his hand directing the men, who were now attacked by a very large force.

It being Midsummer night, more men than usual were up at midnight; many citizens had their friends with them, and many a taverner kept his guests beyond lawful hours in assurance of impunity. These came forth at the ringing of the bell and the tramping of the watch, and joined them, though perhaps without adding much to their strength. But it happened also that men in authority, the bishop's men and the sheriff's men, and some soldiers were within hearing, and these took the side of the constituted powers. When to these sources of noise and bustle was added

the throwing open of the windows of bedrooms that were occupied, out of which citizens' heads with their red caps were thrust forth to ask what was the matter, it will be believed that the old church was in the midst of a much more lively scene now than half an hour back.

There was, however, not much harm done at present—there had been more altercation than fighting—for though the venerable watchmen bore formidable bills, they were not anxious to go close enough to use them on youthful opponents, who had quarter staffs which they appeared well-skilled in the handling of, besides fire-arms, of which there were doubtless sufficient for an army in the back-ground. But when the dozen of men at the north door retreated to the west, in obedience to Steynham's orders, the evidences of a more severe struggle were visible. Beset by watchmen from the Newgate side as well as from Chepe, they had had to defend themselves against a very wide line of foes; and broken

crowns, and tattered garments, if nothing worse, were plenty on both sides. The retreating party had lost their temper in the rough struggle, and several of them felt an itching to draw the guns from beneath their cloaks and revenge their wrongs. Perhaps nothing short of Markham's positive commands could have kept them from a very extensive slaughter. One of them, indeed, as they came to the West front and were joined by the other party, whispered to Markham—

"Look you, Master Harry, I trow the old bishop knoweth what we are doing, for yonder he is looking forth from his window; shall I send a bullet through him, and his men will fly?"

"Not for all the world," said Harry; "the bishop is my father's friend, and no hair of his head shall be touched—think you I would be a murderer?" Then shouting that all his men might hear him, he continued, "Hearken to me, my men: I will have this girl put in safety if I be hanged or

hurried for it: but if any one of you injure a man save me that hindereth or assaulteth you, with mine own hands will I deliver him up to the sheriff to be dealt with according to law."

One of the constables of the watch hearing this reasonable speech, stopped his men, and said to the rebels—

"This is well spoken: but if ye mean no harm, why do you oppose the Queen's authority? I promise ye shall have a fair hearing if ye will accompany me to Ludgate."

But Steynham replied—"I crave no fair hearing, Master Constable: what is done is done, and it behoveth us to keep out of all gates."

"Master Steynham, is that you in rebellion?" cried the constable. "Surely you are ill advised to give way to treason."

"Yea, but I must stand to what I have begun," he replied; "wherefore I will talk no more, but depart in peace if ye will suffer me, or defend myself if I be assaulted."

"You cannot be suffered to depart," said the constable—"if you listen not to authority, you must be compelled. On then, my merry men, and hale them to prison."

"Take warning, then, all of you," cried Steynham, "and fight with fair English weapons—staffs, or swords: shoot neither bullet nor bolt, for if any of my men fall by such weapon, by the blessed Saviour, we will fire two score of harquebusses into the very midst of you!"

He drew the men at once from the corner of Ludgate Street to join with those from the north side, and took the command of their retreat by the south, where the remainder of the men were on guard, and were attacked by a numerous body. The men were placed side by side, quarter staff in hand, Steynham in front also brandishing his quarter-staff, but wearing also somewhat more than a yard of stout steel at his side. The men retreated with their faces to the foe, with great probability that they would have escaped even from a much

greater multitude of persons, provided no missiles were brought to bear against them, and they were not assailed in the rear.

The former danger Steynham had used the best means to guard against, though one of the men was shortly after beaten down by a heavy stone. The danger of an assault in the rear could not be well avoided, as the sound of the whistle, to call his men together, would bring also an opposing party. Markham, meanwhile, impatient at the quiet office of guarding a girl while the din of arms was loud on both sides of him, gave Annot into the hands of one of the wounded men, to be taken towards the water side; but she, however timid and fearful in some circumstances, having acquired a confidence in him which she had not in the others, begged not to be sent away, but to be allowed to hold his hand, assuring him that she had no fear but that he would be hurt. Finding that he could not prevail on her to go away with a stranger, after repeatedly pressing her, he

gave way, and holding her right hand in his left, sword in hand, ran to the guard at the south door, and drew them down to the small road by Doctors' Commons, by which they were to gain the river.

These events must be described one after another, though they took place simultaneously. Steynham was drawing his forces away, while Markham was drawing his, and they came back to back opposite the entrance of the Doctors' Commons, fighting vigorously in both directions, and Annot in the midst not escaping free from the elbows and heels of her defenders. Several of the men wounded with the bludgeons, more than one cut with the bills, had been ordered down to the water side, stones were flying fast, the men were driven closer and closer on each other by the weight of the rapidly increasing populace on each side: it appeared an impossibility to enter the lane in line without sacrificing some of their men, which they were determined never to do; and even Steynham, though his voice rang

[redacted] and steady through the din, had very painful notions of success.

But a new power appeared on the scene: the reinforcements had not heard a cry that rang round the circumference, and spread far and wide into Cheapside and Watling Street; and from Ludgate to Newgate. This was the cry of "Prentices! Clubs! Clubs for Master Skevington, 'prentices!" shouted by shrill voices and sturdy ones too, from window to window, near the tops of a thousand houses. But the effect of it was soon apparent. Wherever the eye turned, no house could be discerned that was not giving up an inhabitant to the conflict; shop-doors and cellar-doors were stealthily opened and again shut after letting out a young warrior: from windows on second and third floors, and higher, ropes were dropped out, sliding down which might be discerned a blue gown, white stockings, and perhaps a cap, but certainly a stout club. On the very house-tops were juvenile human beings discernible in the same well-known

uniform; and, after a very short pause, they might be seen scaling some roofs, creeping around others, and jumping over other impediments, but coming at length on the public road. Many an honest citizen that night called to John and Tom, and was replied to by the feigned voice of Molly, the handmaiden, who received the master's strict commands that they should not follow the 'prentices cry, but who had just let out John and Tom to join the scuffle, and would sit up for the next two hours to give them an opportunity of slipping back again to their beds.

The effect of this was soon to be seen: the young citizens had heard from their windows that Master Steynham was concerned, and that he had taken a girl from the bishop—they had not waited to put an ill-construction on what was said—the thought that hearty and merry Master Steynham was fighting with a bishop for a girl was quite enough for their imaginations; they required nothing now to direct

their sympathies—the white hose, the buckled shoes, the leathern breeches and blue coat were donned in a single minute; and in the next the warrior was in the melée.

Down they came in all directions, above and below, the heavens appeared to rain combatants, the very graves seemed to have given up their dead in blue garments; so rapidly did they spring over the church-wall, and so directly did they pitch—often on men's shoulders—from the eaves.

It was very fortunate that these gentlemen possessed neither of the plausible virtues of impartiality and discretion; but took all at once the same side, and delivered their missions with great plainness, without considering very narrowly the consequences to themselves. These short clubs were found very difficult to be dealt with by the bearers of longer weapons, for while the quarter-staff, the gleave or the long bill was crossed or parried by the one opposed, the owner received a knock on the head or the

hand from an urchin who had crept under their weapons, and went disabled from the field. The young fellows, in the confidence of youthful agility and courage, cared very little for a blow that let out no brains—that did no worse than stun them awhile; and anything more serious than this the forest of clubs assured them against. There were many attempts to make some of them prisoners, but no sooner had a watchman seized one apprentice, than his heels were tripped up by a dozen of his fellows, his lanthorn was seized and himself dismissed with a cudgelling. It was indeed such rare sport to beat down the enemy's weapon, and secure his light, that it was not long before three parts of the lanthorns were in the hands of the young warriors. Now or never, was the time to strike for the water. The triple blast of Steynham's whistle rang boldly through Paul's Yard, and in the next minute, Markham's men had marched into the lane and left the entrance guarded by five hundred boys.

Nimbly they jumped about, flourishing their clubs in the faces of the mob, but very firmly did they maintain their post at the end of the street, while the party they had rescued pursued their way. But many minutes had not elapsed before the sound of war was heard in the road they had taken, when the youths sprang along to see what it might be. A body of the watch, bishop's servants, and even some of the Queen's guard, had slipped away and met the retreating culprits in the dark lane, and made a vigorous effort to capture them. They were, however, driven by the apprentices into Fish-street, whence they had come, and then the apprentices surrounded their friends and accompanied them as a guard of honour. Markham was no longer in a fighting condition: a blow on his arm had forced the sword from his hand, and the pressure of the crowd was so great that he could not have recovered it, even if he had not felt that he was unable to hold it. Besides this, Annot clinging to him in the

midst of the tumult, had been much buffeted, and trodden on, and had at length become unable to walk any further, when Markham caught her up by his left arm, and in spite of her remonstrances and assurances that she could do very well, made her consent to be carried by him. They went somewhat in advance of their friends, as the safest spot; and of this Harry thought more at present than of deeds of arms. The little girl, after a few steps, put her arm around his neck to steady herself, and at the same time stooped so as to whisper in his ear—

"I fear I weary you, sir?"

"No, my good girl," he replied, "I never carried before a burden I found so easy to bear."

"Doth your arm pain you greatly?"

"No, Annot, I feel it not at all; I could lose an arm this moment without minding it."

Annot did not reply at once, but when she did, she said—

"Ah! I know why, sir!—you are thinking of the dear, beautiful lady, Mistress Granville. You know what hearty thanks and blessings you will receive for this kindness to one whom she honoureth with her protection."

"Yes. I was thinking of her, Annot," replied Markham, parrying the latter words; "but why call you her beautiful that have never beheld her beauty? And even if you saw it, it is her least excellence."

"Alas, sir! I speak with the language of those that see. I have heard violets, and roses, and sunshine, and other beloved things, called beautiful: and so all things that I love are to me beautiful. Oh! how I wish I could do something so kind and bold as this you have done to night!"

"And why?"

"Oh! Lady Anne would love me for it so well!"

"But she could not love you better than she doth now."

"Yea, but perhaps she loveth me as a

great lady loveth a poor girl, blind and helpless; then, she would love me like one that was worthy her love, and I should feel that I was worthy of it."

"A right noble ambition, dear Annot," replied Markham, pressing the little hand that had found its way into his; "to feel worthy that lady's love would be indeed a reward for any action."

Steynham here clapped his hand on Markham's shoulder, saying—

"We are now at the water-side; and, without mishap, shall shortly be in safety."

He at the same time whispered in his friend's ear, and immediately after opened a door in the wall near his own house, leading to Queenhithe Wharf, the boys guarding both sides of Thames Street, as well as that down which they had come, while Steynham stood at the door counting off his men, who went in towards the water. As soon as they were all in, he shouted to the boys—

"My young masters, I give ye hearty thanks for your aid this night, but for which

I suspect I might have had chains on my legs to-morrow; and I hope ye have no worse hurts than broken crowns or bloody noses, which none of us care much about. But now that the work is done, I pray ye, return to your homes with as much speed as may be, injuring no man by the way; for, be assured, that before this time the constables have sent to the Tower for soldiers."

"Nay, Master Steynham," cried a hundred voices, "but we will stay and guard your house!"

"Thank you, fellow citizens," he replied; "my house will shift for itself; nothing is there that I regard. As for me, my ship is on the water, and I may go a very long journey, though I hope some day to witness your sports again."

"When, good Master Steynham?"

"When the Lady Elizabeth is queen," replied he.

"That time thou shalt never see!" cried a loud voice; and at the same moment a

sword flashed in Steynham's eyes, when he sprang back, at the same time drawing his sword, and discerning who had assaulted him—

"Ha, ha! Mr. Spy! thou playest the assassin, dost?" Steynham cried, again advancing towards the assaulter, who was indeed the same man that had disturbed the meeting at his house two nights back, and who had now crept behind the boys while they were listening to his farewell words, and endeavoured to gratify his personal revenge, by which he would have also acquired the goodwill of church and state.

"Stand back, boys!" cried Steynham, "and give us fair play. A ring! a ring! I will shew ye that your old friend needeth not a guard against one man."

There might be a little of the boaster in this; for Steynham had had as much experience in the use of the sword as almost any man, and possessing very considerable strength and agility, it was very easy to shew as much courage as was manifested by

his speech. His opponent, also, was by no means an indifferent swordsman; but not only was he inferior to Steynham, but the consciousness of fighting in a ring, every person of which was opposed to him, destroyed his confidence and confused his sight. It was apparent to the youthful fencers that their old favourite might have stricken off his head, or transfixed him, and they became rather impatient at seeing him cast away his chances. But it was not long before he gave them to understand the spirit of his revenge, for, turning up the sword of his assailant, he inflicted so deep a cut on the wrist of the sword arm that the hand dropped useless by his side, and the sword fell to the ground.

"I take an evil right hand from you," cried Steynham, "in return for the hundred righteous lives you would have taken the other night; and also, that if you continue to be Dr. Bonner's spy, ye may not have a sword to defend yourself. And now, go tell thy master what thou hast seen, and

be sure that I will return to England when such devilish wretches as thou have no authority in the land."

To this speech, the apprentices gave a hearty shout; when Steynham, waving his hand for silence, cried—

"I pray ye, good friends, let the man go home; and touch him not, for my sake, who love well the hearty apprentices of London; and now, farewell—and God bless you all till I see you again! Be bold and honest; and I hope every one of ye will be mayor, sheriff, or alderman."

So saying, Steynham, followed by a parting shout, went in at the door and carefully bolted it after him.

This lingering at the door after his companions were gone, was not entirely from a love of fighting or speech-making, though there was a motive for it. It was not enough to get to the water-side: there was also getting on the water, and rowing a couple of miles to his ship, which lay somewhat below the Tower. When Steynham had di-

rected Markham towards the wharf, he had whispered a request that he would see the boats got from their chains as quietly as possible, and the whole company again numbered and seated, and he would undertake to keep the attention of friends and foes at the gate. When he supposed sufficient time had been allowed, he followed, and was glad to find that the men had worked well and cautiously: the boats were out, the people seated, no watch was on the water, and the river and the city were still, excepting the lessening tramp of the apprentices hastening homewards.

Then Steynham took an oar in the foremost boat, and struck out leisurely for London Bridge. Markham lifted Annot into a boat as soon as he beheld the men engaged in their work, and seated himself at her side. In such circumstances, he could not help thinking of her, devotion to whom had brought him there; and he had not been seated a minute before he had taken Annot's hand, saying—

"And you think Mistress Anne will love me better for this deed?"

"Assuredly will she—not that I am worth a gentleman's trouble to take from destruction, but that the action sheweth the gentle heart, which she most inwardly loveth."

"To believe that, dear Annot," said Markham, "I would break every gaol in the kingdom, and find pleasure in the fire of Smithfield; but you are in error—your beloved lady and mine will not thank me—will not love me for this night's service: she hath cast me off, and will never suffer me to behold her more. And you, too, gentle Annot, whose tears I feel on my cheek, you would take your hand from mine, and refuse to speak of our dear lady to me, if I should tell you what I have done."

"I think not, dear sir," replied Annot. "I will always love you for your own sake, as well as for my dear lady's; but, if I be not too bold, I would gladly know why you fear our lady's displeasure?"

"I am ashamed to say, Annot; but I

must undergo the shame. It was I who delivered you into Dr. Bonner's hands."

"And what besides, sir?"

"Nay, Annot, there is naught besides."

"You trouble yourself surely without cause," said Annot, in a gentle manner. "Lady Anne hath the most generous heart; and think you she will place less confidence in you than I did when you came to my prison?"

"But you knew not that I had done this."

"Yea, I did, well."

"And how did you know it?"

"When I felt your hand, I knew very well that it was the same that took me up yesterday."

"And did you not curse me afterwards for my cruelty?"

"No, sir; I knew you had a good heart, by the very gentleness with which you took me—no man's hand hath dealt so kindly with me since. I was only sorry that a man used to gentle manners found it necessary

to deliver me into cruel hands; and I thought the kind Lady Anne would be very sorry, for I thought, though you did not speak, that you were Master Markham."

Harry longed to ask how she had heard of him, that he might perhaps hear that his lady had spoken of him; but an awakening sense of prudence and modesty restrained him, and he said only—

"It was a cruel deed, Annot; and I must suffer for it very deeply, as I ought. But though I have lost the love which I prized before all the world, on account of it, I have never felt so deeply the wrong I did you as now, when I know how gentle and forgiving a creature I sinned against."

"You have not injured me," she replied; "nor ought you to be sorry. You did your duty, as a true Catholic, against one whom you esteemed a heretic; and consider, sir, that if you had not taken me up, a rougher hand would have done it, and then no one would have rescued me. Oh no, sir, I am very grateful to you; and sure am I, in your

behaviour to me, our dear lady will discern a stronger proof of a generous heart than you would have given by opposing the bishop at first."

"Your words are sweet, Annot," he replied; "but I must not believe them. Mistress Granville and I will never meet again."

"Then she and I will never meet again!" cried Annot, with energy, "if she be so angry with that which maketh me grateful. I say this because I know you are in error—not that I could ever live from her; but knowing as I do how just and generous she is, I am sure she will be proud of the friend that feeleth so kindly."

The conversation was now interrupted by the stopping of the boat, and some little noise made by the other boats coming together, when Annot, in some alarm, asked whether she were on the way to her mother. Markham replied by requesting her to be patient for a few minutes, and she then suffered herself to be drawn up into the ship, where Steynham was already providing for

her comfort; and on her appearance, conducted her into the cabin. Markham now saw that his friend had not fully acquainted him with his purposes, for, on entering the cabin, he beheld about a score of men and women, of various ranks, whom Steynham was conveying to Holland, on their way to various parts of the Continent, out of the reach of British persecution. Besides this, Master Barker and Ralph were present, who, in the most rapturous terms, congratulated Annot on her safety, and welcomed her.

Ralph, indeed, from the excessive expression of his joy, appeared somewhat more of a natural fool than he has hitherto appeared, treating Annot as a doting father would treat a helpless infant just escaped from a terrible danger.

But there was no time for delays of this sort: the wind was fair, foes were behind, and the sailors were getting everything ready for starting. It was at once decided that Ralph must go ashore; at hearing which, Annot also unconsciously assumed the attitude of de-

parture. But Markham had given her at first into the care of the female passengers, one or two of whom, persons of some rank and of enlightened understandings, now pointed out the unreasonableness of thinking any more of England at present, and made her discern that the fire of Smithfield was a more certain separation from her native country than Germany would be. Annot could with difficulty imagine a position in which, separated from her mother, she would not avail herself of the ability to return: but at length, at the entreaty of all around, she saw the necessity, and yielded.

Markham then shook hands with Barker, and with Annot, and commended her earnestly to the ladies' care, when the poor creature sprang towards him, caught his hand, burst into tears at the thought of his leaving her, and expressed her determination not to remain without him. Markham's departure was also strongly opposed by Steynham, who indirectly hinted that no boat should be employed in such service, when Harry

gave way to what was, indeed, the only means of saving himself from the public executioner.

He then ordered such of his men on board as were wounded, intending to take them with him until they were well. Ralph he sent on shore with the remainder of his men, two of whom were to convey him to the cottage at the Cross, where he supposed some one connected with the Granvilles would be; and all his men were to hasten to their homes, and say nothing of the affair in which they had been engaged. He then sat down on the deck to look on the beloved land that he might never dare look on again, and the vessel went on towards Holland.

CHAPTER XVI.

All the generations of the world have been in the practice of moralizing on the alterations made by time: it is a common subject, because the mutations of the world are common. No one, probably, has lived to the age of thought without being amazed at the rapidity and the indelible marks of its progress; for no one has lived so long without witnessing some event which must leave its impress for life on his heart and soul. But how few rightly reflect on the instruments used by time in effecting these changes! How few, in looking at the pre-

sent or reading of the past, observe the actual littleness of things and persons that transform social life, over-turn established principles and feelings, and fix their individual qualities on a nation! What changes a year may produce! In that year an Edward dies, a Mary rules, and a Protestant nation becomes Catholic! In six years, Mary dies, and Elizabeth rules, and a Catholic nation becomes Protestant! What might have been the condition of England had Edward lived to an old age!—Probably one bloody page of English history had never been written. Had Mary lived long, how much bloodier had been that record! It is one of the strangest subjects for consideration, that a bold, and intelligent, and honest nation, like the English, should have been turned and twisted about in every direction of political and religious bigotry, at the will of any person occupying a certain position, although imbecile, bloody-minded, or mad, or all of them together!

One of these changes was of great importance to the persons in this narrative.

Imagine that four years are passed away, and that on Midsummer Eve, 1549, we are again at Clawton Hall. In that beautiful room everything is as we last beheld it —not only the adorned walls and the carved beams—for they might stand for ages—but the same persons, and many more mentioned in these pages, who then seemed in danger of destruction. Yes, entirely out of danger, in the full enjoyment of health, in the assured prospect of happiness, on that dais, which is more like a quiet chamber of love than a formal throne, are seated, with few exceptions, all the persons that have spoken and acted in this narrative. Queen Mary was not there—she died of a broken heart on November 14th of the past year—the unkindness of a beloved husband, and patriotic grief for the loss of Calais, the last remnant of England's victories in France, killed her. King Philip was not there—he had returned to Spain to commence the exterm-

nating persecution and cunning cruelty that were to make his name the most hideous in history. Bishop Bonner was not there—he had been sent once more to the Marshalsea prison, to commence a long imprisonment from which death alone was to free him—this was the reward of his cruelty. Dr. Tonstall was not there—he had been sent to a somewhat milder prison, from which his extreme old age promised and gave him a speedy deliverance—this was the reward of his conscientious belief and gentle deeds. On that dais were Sir Thomas Granville, looking as bold and happy as if he had never been stricken to the ground by a priest—Ralph, with a new suit of motley, a new set of gibes, and the brightest face he had worn for many a day—Master Barker, whose calm intellectual countenance was without anxiety or fear—Annot Palmer, in whose happy face the most keen observer could not have traced the want of eye-sight or the pallidness of torture—Master Steynham, whose jolly face was the very quint-

essence of English good-humour, and good nature — Mistress Anne Granville, whose beauty was not adorned by the flashes of generous anger, but softened by blushes and smiles; and Master Harry Markham, who looked as little as possible like a discarded and melancholy lover. For the minor persons, a word will suffice. The two doctors had slunk away to their holy father, the pope, to be ready for fresh jesuitical disputations, and new scenes of cruelty; Widow Palmer was in her bed at the Cross, with Margery and a bottle of good old wine for her amusement; Gardiner had died before the Queen, in horrible torture; Pole, twelve hours after her; and old Barnard, Bonner had contrived to send to the flames.

The circumstances that had created the present situation may be soon related. In his new-born zeal for charity and tenderness, arising, in the first place, from the consciousness of what he had lost by not practising them, but becoming a sincere convic-

tion as he reflected on the words and the heart of his beloved lady, Master Harry Markham was not content with putting the blind girl in a place of safety, nor even with seeing that she wanted for nothing. Perhaps the knowledge that she was Mistress Anne's friend inclined him to esteem her; perhaps her own gentleness, helplessness, and innocence, as he conversed with her in the ship, assisted in awakening his tenderness; but certain it is that long before they arrived at Geneva, which was to be her abiding place, he loved to converse with her, and would even seat himself at her side as though she were a noble lady, and take her little hand in his, and call her sister. Perhaps the growing partiality of the little girl for him was not without effect on his heart; for clinging in her helpless condition to any one whose voice was that of kindness, Annot soon began to love him and look up to him as her protector: and thus she grew to have a higher opinion of him than she could have

formed from sitting with him at the somewhat stately and formal banquet at Clawton. There was a bond of union between them—a subject for conversation which was never wearisome — it was Anne Granville.

Harry Markham's faith, such as it was, was by no means shaken: he was as firm a papist as ever, but his prejudices were greatly modified a very few hours after leaving England. The manly courage and rattling good humour of Steynham, the candid fearlessness and charitable philanthropy of Barker, eradicated from his mind certain notions of sourness and vindictiveness which he had been taught to connect with protestantism; the perfect humility, the almost passionless forgiveness of Annot, made him ashamed of persecution and persecutors; and not long after he lost sight of the British coast, he could have almost doubted whether some of his heretic companions were not as worthy men as Dr. Bonner, good Catholic as he undoubtedly was.

At Geneva, Markham did not endeavour to provide Annot a protector of his own faith, as he might be expected to do. He left this office to Steynham and Barker, who, by the aid of their connexions, soon discovered a suitable matron for her protection and comfort, and Annot was as comfortable as she had ever been, in all points but one. The gentleness which was the peculiarity of her character, and which had created in her heart such a sense of filial duty, now by the aid of her memory, conjured up a thousand visions of her mother's distress and want, and deprived her of comfort. This distress was soon confided to her protector, who endeavoured to relieve it, without signifying his intention to her, from a sincere wish to spare her the pain of disappointment. By means of agents, he communicated with friends in England on this subject, and before many weeks he could congratulate himself on all possible atonement for the evil he had done the blind girl.

There could be no hesitation, of course,

about widow Palmer being allowed to leave the country: her orthodoxy was too well known to her neighbours, and would be too eloquent in reply to any questioner to admit of doubt. The only objection was her personal afflictions. But the poor woman, her temper too much spoiled by disease and persecution to value any comfort or good in possession, and attuned only to complaint, soon felt the value of the daughter when she could no longer scold her: she found nobody that Lady Anne sent to her would forestall her wishes, bear patiently her rebukes, or obey submissively her commands. But a more human feeling even she possessed: parental anxiety for her child was not unknown to her discontented heart: while the child was before her well and safe, she could grumble at and chide her—she could be cruel in her reproaches—she could be violent in her reproofs; but when the child was no longer there, and her fate was doubtful, the hidden, but unquenchable love of the mother's heart burst forth, and

many and many a time did the poor woman turn her face on her pillow and weep for very love over her lost child. With the utmost alacrity, then, did she prepare to obey Harry Markham's friends, and stifling her pains in the hope of rejoining Annot, suffered herself to be carried away on her couch, and put on board of a ship to be carried out of England. It would be difficult to say which of the three felt the greatest happiness, when one evening Harry beheld the blind girl throw her arms around her mother's neck in Geneva, and the mother clasp her child to her bosom.

There was something beyond a common atonement in this deed of Harry's. The expense, the trouble, the generosity, were as nothing. While Annot had a mother living at Islington, he seemed to have an indirect connexion with Clawton; but that family removed—the last hope was gone. The insult he had offered to the bishop—to the church—to the Queen, could never be pardoned: so long as the Queen lived, he could

never venture within the limits of England or Spain, or of any nation belonging to them, or acknowledging the power of Rome. He had no reason to suppose the Queen might not live as long as her father, and leave a heir of the same principles; so that this last act seemed to preclude every hope that was attached to his dearest happiness. But even in the midst of that despair of the passions, he was not insensible to the pleasures of conscience: he felt that he had done well, and his heart possessed something besides sadness.

In their little cottage by the lake, Annot renewed the practice of her pretty art: her industrious fingers would not be still: she did her best not to be a burden to her beloved friend, though the few pounds necessary for their sustenance were of the very least account to him. Master Barker preached to an admiring congregation of English refugees: Master Steynham went on the seas in pursuit of his profession: Markham fished, and hunted, and studied

and talked with Annot concerning Mistress Anne Granville.

Thus passed three years; at the end of which thousands of hearts gladdened with inevitable, if blameful joy, to hear that Queen Mary was dying. The Queen died: Elizabeth sat securely on the throne; the scattered Protestants were invited home; Islington was open to Barker, Thames-street to Steynham, Waltham to Markham; the widow longed for her old cottage at the Cross, and Annot cared not to be away from England, when her protector had left her. They all returned to England as soon as they were assured of safety.

Why tell the rest? Can it not all be imagined? Was it not certain that Anne would rush to the cottage as soon as she knew her friend was returned? Was it not certain that Annot would fill her ear with praises of Master Markham, and out of the abundance of her gratitude relate every act and word of the young gentleman through the three years, all of which she had stored up in a

memory peculiar to the blind? But of what avail was this, if Anne had utterly cast him out of her heart, and had listened to the love that would be certainly ready at all times to be poured into the ears of a beautiful heiress? But Anne had no lord besides her father. Whatever gentlemen had looked on her, no one had seen that in her countenance which would encourage him to speak. The fresh gloss of virginity had not been sullied by the breath of passion. She had never heard more of love than the whispers breathed by the first lover and the first beloved. It can be imagined that Harry, if he presumed not to visit Clawton, did call on Annot; that he there met Mistress Anne, and that the young lady, in the frankness of a generous heart, met him with a smile and a tear, and offering him her hand, with a blush, said—

"We are friends, Harry, are we not?"

Another change more honourable to human nature, if less interesting than the present change in their circumstances to the occu-

pants of Clawton Hall, had been wrought by the events of the last four years. However strong might be the people's attachment to their religion, however earnestly they would have forced a complete uniformity in the nation, there arose in the hearts of all people that derived no pecuniary interest from the church, a conviction, undeveloped though it might be in words, that they were men and Englishmen before they were papists. The men, women, and children, were not all devils, if a few of the rulers were. As time rolled on and every week saw the numbers increased of those that were imprisoned, tortured, or burned, the number was also increased of those that lamented the loss of friends. For it will be at once admitted, that the persons destroyed were most likely to have friends, since their death was a proof of their honesty and truth: pardon, on recantation, was salvation for the wavering, the treacherous, the false—the man who was honest, and bold, and conscientious, despised

the offer; and there can be no doubt that the qualities of the mind which led him to the stake, would make him an upright and a trustworthy man in the transactions and intercourse of common life. It will appear probable, therefore, that the best, if not the highest of the Protestant party would be the sufferers; and that as months passed on, and the executions increased, regret and lamentations would increase also. Men began to discover the horror of making Old England such a scene of blood and torture: Humanity, that had slept, awoke, and took the part of the sufferers, even against their own papistical fanaticism: their lamentations and regret became hatred of oppression; and they grew to consider the present government as a monstrous curse on the nation. The interchange of such feelings among the people, the frequent occurrence of Protestants being protected or preserved by Papists, and the bold fearlessness though harmlessness of those that were punished, begat a mutual charity; so that, some

months before Mary died, Papists, as well as Protestants, looked forward to her death with pleasure, in the expectation of a renewal of the milder reign of Edward under the Princess Elizabeth.

Such was the growth of feelings that led to the mixture of persons of opposite faith at Clawton. Not one of them had changed an atom of their original faith. Sir Thomas was still a Papist, and Barker still a Reformer. But both had learned charity. Sir Thomas would have listened to the plain service of the Lutheran church, and Barker would have attended mass, as a matter of compliment to a friend, nor thought they endangered their salvation by it: but either of them would have gone to the stake rather than do it if it were to be considered a recantation or a test of faith. Encomiums on the personal virtues of many of the refugees had been communicated to the families of the Granvilles and the Markhams through Anne and Harry; and this was the reason why many of the more re-

spectable of them were present with the noble families at this celebration of the lady's birth-day.

Of the day's amusements I dare not say much; as they were those appropriated by old English customs to the particular day, and were similar to those described in a former part of this work. Yet was there in every bosom a joy that it had not known for several Midsummers.

On the former occasion the Knight was smarting in his secret heart from a disgrace which could not be revenged in a manly way, and which was the worse for being ridiculous; the young lady was anxious, and the day ended in a sorrow very deep and lasting; and though it were not felt, the want of perfect ease on the part of the heads of the feast prevented a perfect joy on the part of the guests. But now, all this was over. The common law of England seemed no longer in danger of being cast down by the will of the priesthood; the highest man in the church was

no longer protected by monarch or pope against the right of the meanest individual; every man was safe from the tyranny of obsolete laws revived to oppress him, and whoever was punished must have transgressed against a law which, whether just or no, was public. Besides, there was liberty of conscience, that seemed perfect in comparison with the late oppression; and this made men respect each other and themselves. The force formerly laid on people's consciences, if it seemed to raise the church to an unquestioned power, necessarily lowered the dignity of every man, as it took from him the sentiment and spirit of freedom: the very papist, under this new toleration, if he looked with less contempt on the Lutheran, and with less boasting and exultation on his own orthodoxy, felt himself, even in the midst of discussions which sounded strangely free, if not insolent, in a nobler and better position as a man—in a position better fitted to the remembrances of sturdy independence, bravery

and victory, attached to the name of an Englishman.

But of the pleasures of this day there was a more immediate cause than these political and moral considerations. Every person present was in the society of those they loved best: there was not one wanting—not one missing, to leave a void in the heart. The feasting went on merrily. All the Markhams, all the Granvilles, and all their friends, were in the dais: all their dependents, all their humble friends, and all the servants' friends that had or could invent an excuse for admittance were ranged along the tables that filled the body of the hall. The stout baron, the sturdy boar's head, the savoury haunch, the melting capon, sent up their fragrance among the beams of the roof, which would have been a waste but that there was a riotous abundance of their solid substance. At the side of every man stood a huge pitcher of ale or wine, as he loved best; and casks of both, reared at either corner of the hall,

were constantly running. Such a clatter of knives, such a rattle of jugs, such a jingle of merry voices was never heard. All that were busy now had spent the morning in the sports of the park, so that the operation of dinner was more than commonly welcome—there was the charm of a pleasant degree of fatigue superadded to the common gratification of the expected meal, and to the knowledge that it was Midsummer Eve, and their lady's birth-day.

There was another source of joy not yet mentioned, but which perhaps lay even deeper in all hearts than fatigue, hunger, holiday, or birth-day; and it must be mentioned. When the huge joints were taken away sorely disfigured, when knives rattled more languidly, when waiters grew to be useless, when men found time to laugh loud and long, and doublets and corsets were pleasantly tightened, Master Steynham arose from his seat on the dais, with a foaming cup of wine in his hand, and, looking towards the body of the hall, said with a merry smile and a mighty English voice:—

"Ho, my masters and mistresses, I am about to drink a health. Ye doubtless suppose that I shall name our gracious Queen, Elizabeth, God bless her! But no, my masters; although the Queen's majesty hath not a more loyal subject than I, she shall, with your good will, give way at this present time. Yet will I not so far fall from my loyalty but I will name a lady. What say you, then, to the queen of this feast—Mistress Anne, Sir Thomas Granville's daughter, Master Harry Markham's wife? Will ye pledge me, you rogues?"

There was little need of the question: the hall rang with acclamations that might have been heard at Islington. Harry Markham, looking proud and happy, arose to return his thanks, and his bride hid her blushes in Annot's bosom.

THE END.

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